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Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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Artman driver out on bail

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The driver of the Artman garbage truck that figured in a fatal accident at the Puerto Rico intersection last Feb. 1 that killed a man has been allowed to post a $1,000 bail, soon after his arrest last Friday evening.

The Superior Court has allowed the release of Eduardo Fabia, who is being charged with homicide by vehicle, after he posted 1% of his initial

See DRIVER on Page 4

Eduardo Fabia leaves the Marianas Business Plaza courtroom following his bail modification hearing yesterday.
KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Tinian teacher allegedly sexually harassed students

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Tinian Jr./Sr. High School teacher was arrested yesterday for allegedly sexually harassing four of his students, all of them minors.

Bryan Mojica, 24, was arrested on Tinian and the Superior Court imposed a $20,000 cash bail and remanded Mojica back to the custody of the Department of Corrections.

In a statement, the school district said, "The Public School System takes this

See TEACHER on Page 4

16 Turkish workers leave; 11 remain

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sixteen Turkish nationals who are former workers of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, whose H-2B visas have already expired, left the CNMI yesterday to reunite with their families back home.

Eleven other former IPI workers who are also Turkish will be leaving later because they don't have plane tickets yet and their H-2B visas will not expire until Feb. 19., said Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) Sun-

See WORKERS on Page 4

Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), her husband Franklin R. Babauta, Rep. Tina Sablan Rep. Celina R. Babauta, and lawyer Richard Miller pose in a group photo with Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Turkish workers during a barbecue farewell dinner held at IPI's housing in Chalan Laulau Sunday night. Sixteen Turkish workers left Saipan yesterday for home, while 11 others remain here.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

18-year-old is Guam's 130th COVID death

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An 18-year-old woman with no known medical history has become Guam's 130th COVID-19-related fatality, even as six new cases of COVID-19 were identified in Guam last Feb. 6.

According to the Joint Information Center, the young patient passed away at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Feb. 7 at approximately 9:15am. JIC stated that the patient was admitted to the GMH Emergency Room last Feb. 7 and tested

See COVID on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 8, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,643	6	7,649
Recovered	7,416	0	7,416
Active	97	6	103
Deaths	129	1	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			118,693

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			173

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: 11,920
Tinian: 141
Rota: 353

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Docomo Pacific tests a new driverless concept cart "SC-1" powered by Docomo Pacific 5G.

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NATION
Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial is opening this week with a sense of urgency.

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LIFE & STYLE
The Sistine Chapel reopens to public view for the first time since its November closure.

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Sen. Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian), center, poses with Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente, fourth from right, and other CNMI Department of Labor staff last week during a meeting of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DOL briefs Senate committee on PUA, other DOL programs

The CNMI Department of Labor met Wednesday last week with the 22nd Legislature's Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations, chaired by Sen. Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian), to provide an update on the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, as well as provide a briefing on the other programs under CNMI DOL.

King-Nabors had invited Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente and the DOL staff after recently visiting the offices of the Department of Labor on Capital Hill.

Benavente and Labor staff presented the members of the Senate JGLFR committee detailed statistics, financial data, and discussed challenges with implementing the PUA program, from its inception in early 2020 to the current date.

"We also provided information about other components of the Department of Labor, such as the [Workforce Investment Agency], [Occupational Safety and Health Administration], Enforcement, Administrative Hearing Office, and Employment Services," said Benavente.

The Department of Labor is also scheduled to meet with members of the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs, chaired by Rep. Vicente C. Camacho (D-Saipan). ***(PR)***

Torres: CNMI got $94M

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres disclosed in a radio news briefing last Friday that the CNMI has received $94 million from the federal government for different projects.

Torres

"We have a lot of projects moving forward," said Torres.

He said they received $12 million for the governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund 2. Torres said he had already written to the Northern Marianas College, which will get $12 million.

Torres said the Public School System also received $61 million to assist with personnel costs but also to purchase equipment and materials in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

He believes PSS got between $22 million and $23 million last year.

"This time around they got $61 million, which is excellent," said Torres, adding that they met PSS early last week.

He said the CNMI also received $10 million in housing rental assistance. "Hopefully that will be rolling out very soon," the governor said.

Torres said the $11 million the CNMI got from the U.S. Economic Development Administration will be used to fix the damaged roads caused by Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018.

"So there's a lot of funds coming in, and we're maximizing as much as we can in expediting the expenditures and getting our projects moving forward," Torres said.

Torres said they will be working on getting federal funds to assist private partners as well. "So that will be forthcoming," Torres said.

PRE-VALENTINE'S DAY
PACKAGE STILL AVAILABLE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13th!
Pre-Valentine's Day Romance Package
Treat your sweetheart to a romantic weekend at Aqua Resort Club Saipan. Wine, Dine & Relax with a romantic night in our deluxe rooms and a delicious 5-course dinner at Kevin's—The Prime Rib & Seafood.
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1 Night Stay in our Deluxe Garden View Room (Complimentary upgrade to Oceanview upon availability)
Romantic Valentine's Day 5-Course Dinner at Kevin's for Two
Complimentary Bottle of House Wine with Dinner
Complimentary Early Check-In at 10:00am | Late Check-Out at 5:00pm
$220.00 (+15% Tax)
Deluxe Oceanfront Suite
1 Night Stay in our Deluxe Oceanfront Suite
Romantic Valentine's Day 5-Course Dinner at Kevin's for Two
Complimentary Bottle of House Wine with Dinner
Complimentary Early Check-In at 10:00am | Late Check-Out at 5:00pm
$350.00 (+15% Tax)
Valentine's Day Dinner at Kevin's
Romantic Valentine's Day 5-Course Dinner
Complimentary Bottle of House Wine with Dinner (1 Bottle for every 2 guests)
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Bill reducing Tinian casino commissioner's salary signed into law

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has signed into law a Senate local bill that clarifies the term in office of a commissioner of the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission and reduces commissioners' compensation from $75,000 annually to $55,000.

Torres informed Tinian and Aguiguan Legislation Delegate chair Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) and Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) last Friday that Senate Local Bill 21-11, Draft 1 is now Tinian Local Law No. 21-16.

The bill was passed by the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation of the 21st Legislature last Dec. 23.

Under the bill, the commission shall be composed of members appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the Tinian Municipal Council.

The commissioners shall serve a term of six years except that, upon the first five appointments, two shall serve six-year terms, two shall serve five-year terms, and one shall serve a four-year term, to be determined by a drawing of lots by the members after their confirmation.

A person shall not serve more than one term as commissioner.

A commissioner's term shall start on the day of his or her confirmation by the Tinian Municipal Council. Upon the confirmation, a contract shall be executed that reflects a six-year term in office.

Commission members shall elect from among themselves a chairman and a vice chairman to serve a term of two years. The chairman and the vice chairman may be re-elected.

Each member shall receive compensation of $55,000 annually from a budget adopted by the commission for its operations and approved by the Tinian Legislative Delegation. The $55,000 compensation shall apply to new commissioners.

No commissioner shall be given fringe benefits. All members of the commission shall have paid or be entitled to reimbursement for their expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, including expenses of travel outside Tinian.

The members of the commission are not employees of the commission or the Commonwealth government.

Hofschneider introduced the bill after finding that there has been considerable confusion and debate regarding the commencement of the term of office of a commissioner under a previous local law.

Casino revenues on Tinian have greatly diminished since the closure of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. Although there are other casino licensees, they have not been able to build an operational casino facility at this time. As a result, Hofschneider said, the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission revenue collections have dwindled and major cost-cutting measures have been implemented to offset the loss.

Hofschneider said more cost-cutting measures such as the reduction of the salaries of the commissioners and elimination of fringe benefits are necessary to keep the commission open during these difficult economic times. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars this month. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Feb. 11 – Teaming Arrangements & JVs – What are they and which is right for your business? The Guam PTAC will discuss the Federal regulations related to these arrangements and discuss ways to use these arrangements effectively.

■ Feb. 18 – Cybersecurity – The Guam PTAC will discuss what federal contractors can do to make sure they are complying with DOD requirements with respect to keeping data protected. DOD's upcoming Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification and the DFARS Interim Rule will be discussed.

■ Feb. 25 – PIEE – Do you have a DOD contract and need to get paid? The Guam PTAC will explain DOD invoicing procedures using the Wide-Area Workflow module in the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment system.

Register at http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

Emergency power outage today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be an emergency scheduled power service interruption today, Feb. 9, 2021, for the areas of Lower Base, Navy Hill, and Puerto Rico.

On Feb. 6, a vehicular accident damaged CUC's power pole on Chalan Pale Arnold Road fronting the Marina Heights buildings in Puerto Rico. For the safety of the linemen, CUC will need to de-energize the utility lines when replacing the power pole today.

■ Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021- 9am to 9:20am and 12:40pm to 1pm

• Outage Type: Sectionalized Momentary Outage on Feeder 1

• Project Location: Chalan Pale Arnold Road fronting the Marina Heights Building 2

• Power Service Areas Affected:

- Lower Base (Fish & Wildlife Building);

- Puerto Rico (Shell Gas Station, CUC Water/Wastewater Office, Island Apparel, Puerto Rico Dr., Malinao Dr., Langlat Pl., Marinu Pl., Salasa Pl., Mattinan Pl., ChaoChao Pl., Unai Ln., partial of Isla Dr., Pacific Trading Company, Anaks, a portion of the U.S. Army Reserve Building and Marina Heights Building Nos. 1 & 2);

- and Lower Navy Hill

Traffic Light Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Water Well Affected: PR-164

Wastewater Lift Station Affected: S-1, S-3 and the Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021- 9am to 1pm

• Outage Type: Sectionalized Momentary Outage on Feeder 1

• Project Location: Chalan Pale Arnold Road fronting the Marina Heights Building 2

• Power Service Areas Affected: A portion of the U.S. Army Reserve Building, Marina Heights Building Nos. 1 & 2 and Lower Navy Hill

• Traffic Light Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

• Water Well Affected: None

• Wastewater Lift Station Affected: S-8

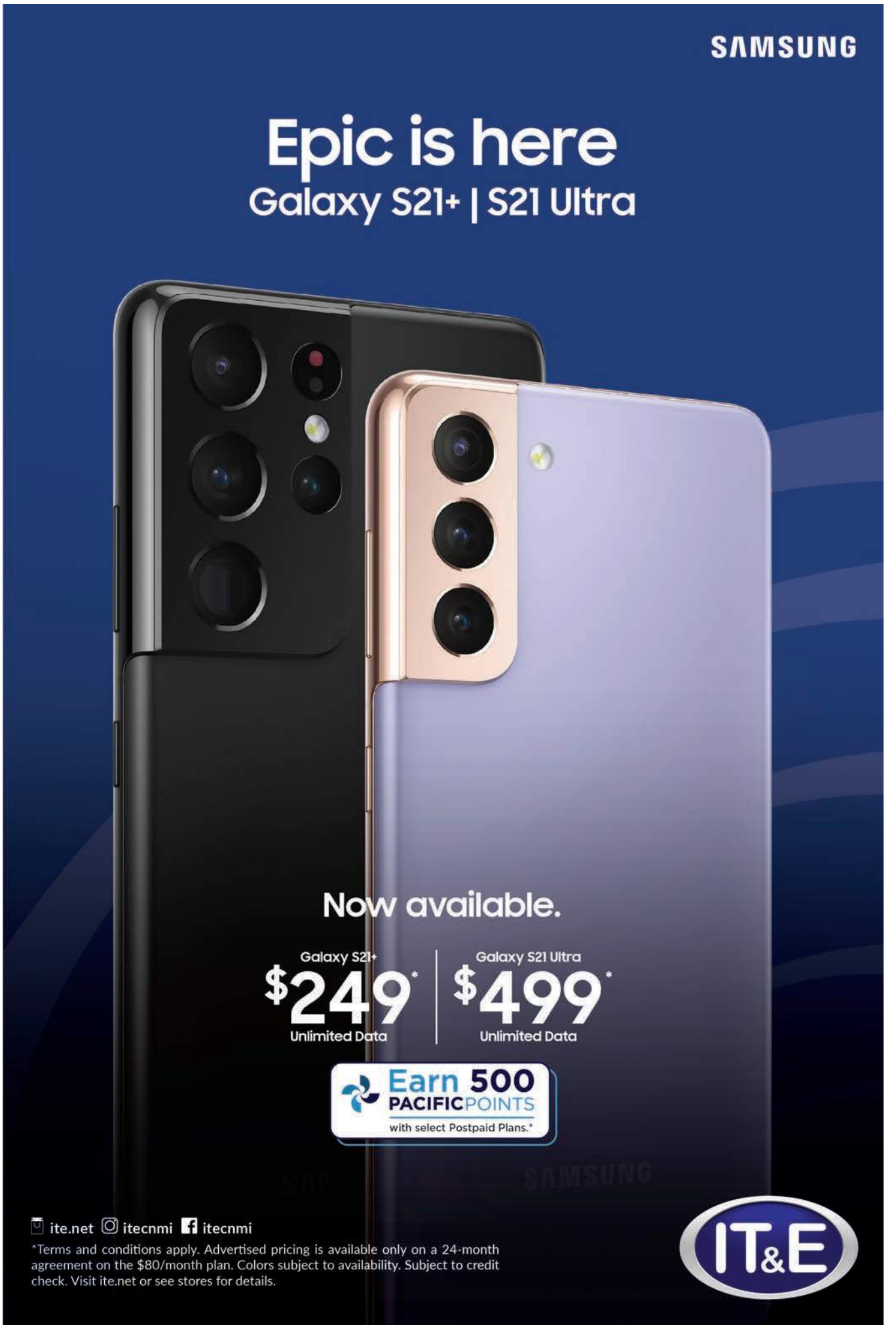
Motorists are advised to proceed with caution and/or take an alternative route when traveling by the area as the outer, northbound lane fronting the MH-2 building will be closed for the duration of the outage. ***(PR)***

Rip currents seen until tomorrow

There is a high rip current risk expected through Wednesday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point dangerous rip currents are expected along east facing reefs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota through Wednesday night. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Into deeper water.

Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are advised to avoid venturing near reef lines facing east. Inexperienced swimmers should stay out of the water. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. Swim in a direction parallel to the shoreline, then head in to shore when you get out of the current. ***(PR)***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IT&E

50 Lions Club members continue monthly cleanup

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fifty members of the Lions Club International District 204 continued their monthly beach cleanup at the Sugar Dock Beach in Susupe last Feb. 6.

According to project coordinator Mario Mayuga, the District 204-Region 2 Lions Clubs, or Saipan Lions Clubs, composed of eight clubs, signed a memorandum of understanding as part of the Private-Public-Partnership with the CNMI government through the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers with a commitment to adopt, maintain and improve the Sugar Dock Beach and build basic infrastructure and amenities.

Mayuga stated that they pushed through for their cleanup despite the heavy showers.

Mayuga stated that this month's cleanup collected trash and debris within the entire area of Sugar Dock Beach. "We do the bush cutting and coconut tree trimmings every other month. With the clean beach, it will be a place for family gatherings and getting some good exercise. Walking on the beach is better than walking on paved roads, as the sand makes it a little more challenging to move and burns more calories," he added.

Saturnino "Atoy" Banting, Lions Club first vice district governor, said he is grateful to the members who are always there to help the community.

Lions Region 2 chair Alfredo Cabael thanked all the volunteers that helped make Saturday's cleanup successful and safe. "Special thanks to Max Aguon and Akiki Alexander who help in hauling and disposing of trash to the sanitary landfill," said Cabael.

According to Mayuga, the Region 2 Lions has eight clubs that consist of the Saipan Fil-American Lions Club, the Saipan Unity Lions Club, the Saipan Marianas Lions Club, the Saipan Alliance Lions Club, the Saipan Natibu Lions Club, the Saipan Centennial Lions Club, the Saipan Pacific Lions Club, and the Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club.

Mayuga encourages anyone who has a passion for serving the community to contact the Lions Club if they are interested. They can call Cabael at 483-4663, Eden Mercado at 788-2416, Arceli Lizama at 287-6758, and Tess Marquez at 483-6524. For more information about the Lions Clubs International, visit www.lionsclub.org.

TANAPAG BEACH CLEANUP

The Saipan Unity Lions Club and Teen Unity Leos Club conducted their monthly cleanup at their adopted Tanapag Beach, collecting eight bags of trash. The cleanup was led by SULC president Alicia Barbo and Atoy Banting, with the participation of the Saipan Teen Unity Leo Club led by their president, Vicky Ancheta.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WORKERS

From Page 1

day night.

Babauta said that IPI made a partial payment of their salaries but, according to them, they're still owed five more months' worth of pay.

"They're happy to be back with their families [but] one of them said, you know, the people of the CNMI have been so good to them. They want to return someday with a better employer, better job,'" said Babauta in the interview during the sendoff barbecue get-together hosted by fellow Turkish workers at IPI's housing in Chalan Laulau.

Babauta attended the get-together with her husband, former representative Franklin R. Babauta. Also at the event were Reps. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) and Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan); Propst had already left when *Saipan Tribune* arrived at the event.

Richard Miller, who is the lawyer for some of the Turkish workers that sued IPI, was also there.

Rep. Celina Babauta said the Turkish workers don't want to work for IPI anymore, but that they liked the camaraderie they built with the local community in the past several months.

"They want to come back, they said it's beautiful here," Babauta said.

She said it was the Turkish workers who invited them to join the get-together, which someone in the local community had sponsored.

Miller said the Turkish workers have been on Saipan since January 2020. "They got here the first week of January last year. Maybe somebody came like Dec.30 [in 2019]," Miller said.

One of the workers, Hasan Gokce, 41, said their group was in charge of building the hotel tower of IPI's Imperial Palace Resort in Garapan. He said IPI paid him several paychecks but the total was only $1,200 because he was made to work fewer hours.

With all the expenses he incurred after being jobless in the CNMI for many months, he will be going home with only $350, Gokce said.

In a Facebook post Sunday night, Sablan said these 16 workers who are going home will soon be reunited with their families but they are still owed money. "They still hope for justice," she said.

She said that, although these workers have been through such a terrible ordeal here, they also tell her they are leaving Saipan with fond memories—of the kindness they were shown, the people who helped them, and the beauty of the island. "It was nice to see them smiling and happy tonight. They cooked up some incredible Turkish dishes. Some of the men told me they love to cook. And tonight I learned some of them love to dance, too," Sablan said.

Another Turkish worker toured *Saipan Tribune* around their housing and showed his room, which was clean but just enough for one person. It had one bed and the air-conditioner was working. There are a couple of common bathrooms and water supply.

The worker, who was among those who left yesterday, said they did not have power for two months.

He said he has only $250 to bring home because he already sent some of his money to his family.

It takes four days to get to Turkey from Saipan.

DRIVER

From Page 1

bail, which was $100,000.

During a bail hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho granted the bail modifications for Fabia, 49, and granted his request to appoint his wife as his third-party custodian.

Camacho allowed the Department of Corrections to release Fabia to his wife after she posted a $1,000 cash bail.

Fabia's original bail amount was set at $100,000. He had asked the court to lower that amount to $10,000 and allow him to post 10% of that, which is just $1,000. Camacho denied reducing Fabia's bail to $10,000 because of the severity of the case and because he is a flight risk but still allowed him to post a $1,000 bail, but kept the original bail at $100,00 and hold the $99,000 in abeyance.

Camacho also allowed Fabia to continue working with Artman Environment Corp. as a helper but prohibited him from driving any company-owned vehicles. Fabia was imposed a curfew from 5am to 5pm.

Court documents stated that Department of Public Safety officers were able to determine after further investigation that Fabia and his passenger, Cristopher Lucero, lied to police and were at fault in the accident.

Fabia and Lucero said their traffic signal was green and that the silver Honda Ridgeline "came out really fast."

DPS investigators located a number of eyewitnesses at the Marina Heights Building who stated that they saw the Artman garbage truck run the red light.

Surveillance footage from MH1 and MH 2 were also acquired and investigators said that three different camera angles caught the traffic lights from both sides at the time of the accident. Footage showed that the Artman truck did run a red light.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the collision that took place last Feb. 1 killed Raju Bhai. Rommel Irang, another passenger of the silver Ridgeline, sustained serious injuries while the driver, Quin Manglona, did not sustain any injuries.

Fabia and Lucero left the scene unscathed.

Last Friday, at around 7pm, Fabia was arrested for traffic signal violations, false reports, and homicide by vehicle.

TEACHER

From Page 1

matter seriously because we always want to ensure that all of our students are safe at all times."

Mojica is currently facing charges of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree, assault and battery, and strangulation.

According to court documents, an individual from Tinian Jr./Sr. High School had called DPS on Jan. 29, 2021, at around 5:39pm, reporting that Mojica had inappropriately touched his minor students.

Last Feb. 4, at around 1pm, DPS investigators reviewed the forensic interviews conducted by Division of Youth Services personnel of the alleged victims.

According to one of the alleged victims, a 13-year-old boy, Mojica would allegedly sexually harass him back in 2020 going into 2021, and it made him uncomfortable.

The victim told DYS that Mojica allegedly touched him on his butt for about five seconds in two separate occasions. He also claimed that Mojica rubbed his genitals on his (student's) shoulder while he was in class. Mojica would also allegedly rub his (student's) arms and shoulders on several occasions. He added that Mojica would allegedly hug him and several other classmates from behind and touch them seductively.

The victim told DYS that Mojica would allegedly tell him not to tell anyone about the touching and when he would tell Mojica that he was uncomfortable and to stop touching him, Mojica would say, "I'm going to keep doing it."

There was also an incident when Mojica allegedly rear-choked him for about five minutes where he was "unable to breathe, felt uncomfortable, and was hurting."

Another victim, also a 13-year-old boy, said Mojica allegedly smacked his butt and pulled his hair a few times back in 2020.

The third victim, a 12-year-old boy, said Mojica would allegedly pinch his upper private region outside of his shirt and would also smack his butt. The victim said he also saw Mojica inappropriately touch his other classmates.

The fourth victim said Mojica also smacked his butt back in January and, on several occasions, rubbed his upper private region. He said his classmates would also confide in him about how uncomfortable they felt around Mojica.

COVID

From Page 1

positive upon evaluation.

"To her family and friends, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], Lt. Gov. Josh [Tenorio], and I express our condolences and sympathies. Please know you are not alone in your grief," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. She added that Guam's residents "can't forget the necessary precautions" to keep the island safe.

This is Guam's first death after two weeks. Guam announced its 129th death last Jan. 25—a 50-year-old man who'd been hospitalized with COVID-19 since just before Christmas.

Additionally, JIC announced it had already administered 35,337 doses of the Moderna Inc. and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines to date. More than 8,700 people have received both doses. Guam's population is about 167,000.

Naval Base Guam was able to inoculate its front-line personnel last Jan. 4, and Andersen Air Force Base began doing so about a week later.

JIC reported six new cases of COVID-19 that were identified out of 99 tests performed last Saturday.

To date, there have been a total of 7,649 cases of COVID-19 in Guam, with 130 deaths, 103 cases in active isolation, and 7,416 not in active isolation.

COVID-19 on Saipan

During his radio news briefing last Friday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres reiterated the importance of getting vaccinated, saying "we all have a role in bringing back tourism."

Torres stated that getting the community vaccinated will also bring back the revenue that the CNMI needs. "Until the COVID-19 issue is addressed, we can't expect our tourism market to reopen anytime soon. That's why it's very critical that our information goes out to our community to get vaccinated," said Torres.

He encouraged community members to register to get vaccinated if they haven't done so yet.

Just by taking the vaccine, the community is helping rebuild the economy, and not only protecting themselves, but also the people they love, Torres added.

Another factor that Torres emphasized why it's important to get the CNMI's tourism market back up is so that people could go back to a full 80-hour biweekly work period, employment, and other opportunities. "The only way for us to get back to [an 80-hour biweekly work period], the only way for us to get employment...and other opportunities is to get our tourism back, so the faster we get our community tested and vaccinated, the faster we get in the right direction in bringing back our tourism market," said Torres.

Legislature seeks to maintain public and private partnership

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The two leaders of both chambers of the 22nd Legislature spoke before the Saipan Chamber of Commerce last Wednesday to reiterate the importance of continuing and even strengthening the partnership between the public and private sectors, especially in this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Villagomez

Appearing as guest speakers at the Chamber's general membership meeting at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom in Garapan, House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and Senate president Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian) also outlined their legislative priorities in the coming year.

"I look forward to working with all of you [Chamber] and, based on my experience, I appreciate the fast response time whenever a committee or a member reach out to the Chamber for comments on issues. Sometimes the bills that are proposed and actions taken are not to your liking…but please note, 'differences' is a part of working together and we at the 22nd Legislature look forward to working together with you," said Villagomez.

He went on to detail how intends to advance the CNMI's interest in the 22nd Legislature—"stimulate positive discussions from both sides of the aisle in all areas in our community such as to promote transparency and government accountability, reduction of government debts and obligations, support entrepreneurship, improve the quality of education, health care, public safety and infrastructure, to promote employment, and to protect and preserve culture and traditions."

Hofschneider envisions the Senate shifting its focus to economic policies first. "We will be working with the House of Representatives to push revenue-generating legislation. That's going to go as far as extending the proper request for meetings and comments from business community as well. Last year's fiscal summit included many ideas on taxation. However, we should look beyond tax increase…as we need to continue promoting economic diversity," he said.

Hofschneider would also like to revisit the CNMI's tax structure because the government can use it to offer more incentives for people to get into entrepreneurship.

"We can also extend that to businesses and corporations that have been with us for a number of years. We are looking at how we can assist all of them in terms of revising some of the tax structures before us," he said.

Utilizing the Chamber's experience in business, Hofshnieder asked for their help in aid of legislation in expanding industries in the CNMI. "With your experience, is there any low-impact, high-value industry that we can introduce into the CNMI that will survive in the long run? It is possible to amend the CNMI Qualifying Certificate Program to accommodate new industries or lower existing threshold?"

Hofshnieder said the Senate is also looking to push economic progress on Tinian and Rota to help them diversify their local economies. "On Tinian, there is an ongoing effort to keep the casino industry going and also to build on the cattle industry. …We are going through the motions of getting certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to get the products going. …The infrastructure is already there. …I know Rota is working on projects such as specialty crops as those efforts provide economic opportunities or farmers and ranchers," he added.

Hofschneider

To make opening a business fast and efficient for all islands, Hofschneider believes permit decentralization is the next step. "Decentralization will be especially crucial with federally funded construction projects, Federal Emergency Management Agency projects, the U.S. Department of Defense, and everything else that is associated with construction. … We will also continue nurturing and enhancing our relationship with the DOD as they build in the CNMI. I would like to see DOD turn Tinian into an 'operations hub' like a logistical support."

Hofshneider also welcomed input from the Chamber to tackle the CNMI's current and future challenges. "I believe if we are honest with ourselves, the members of Legislature and elected officials, we can find redundancies and inefficiencies that we can address. ...There is a lot that we want to accomplish in the Senate for the next couple of years and we need all the stakeholders for us to be successful and like to meet with the Chamber more often to get input on how we can support the business community and rebuild our economy."

Zoning board OK's horseback riding application

The Commonwealth Zoning Board has approved a company's application for a conditional use permit to use a vacant 2,600-square-meter lot in Afetnas for horseback riding.

In an interview after the Zoning board's public hearing at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe Wednesday night, Zoning administrator Geralyn C. Dela Cruz said that P&A Corp. will be conducting guided horse tours in their property. "So they cannot go out into the public streets," Dela Cruz said. "So everything is to be done in their property."

The administrator said there is only one horse. "Their goal is to provide more outdoor entertainment for the community," she said.

The location of the proposed Horseback Riding area is behind the Sunshine Laundry on Afetna Road.

Dela Cruz said the company also owns the roller skates at the Winners' compound in Afetnas.

P&A Corp. vice president Doyi Kim signed the application. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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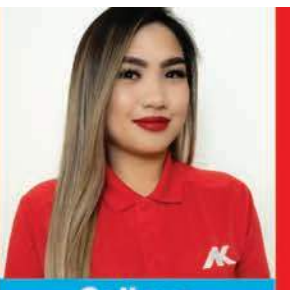
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CNMI working with other territories to fix PUA ineligibility

The CNMI Department of Labor late last week received new information from the U.S. Department of Labor–Employment and Training Administration regarding the potential ineligibility of hundreds of furloughed employees for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance under the Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020

It was the decision of USDOL-ETA that furloughed employees and individuals working reduced hours may not qualify for PUA under the CAA if they cannot clearly prove that the cause of their unemployment continues to be the closure of their place of employment.

"Immediately after learning of the new development, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres was informed and collaboration with U.S. [Delegate] Gregorio Kilili Sablan was requested. At this particular juncture, there is an agreement between our administration, our congressional office, and other territories to protect the welfare of our people," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente.

"As of this press release, we can confirm that Guam [Delegate] Michael San Nicolas is already working on legislation to address the issue of individuals on reduced hours. We just need to include workers who have been furloughed into that legislation," said Benavente.

There is consensus among the territories that a ruling such as the one described above for furloughed employees will have an exacerbated effect on many if not all territorial governments. Moreover, each of these islands do not effectuate other unemployment insurance programs to provide a safety net for displaced or dislocated workers.

"This decision by USDOL is unfortunate as it affects the majority of PUA claims here in the CNMI. However, we will continue to collaborate with our federal partners, our congressional office, and our territorial colleagues to protect our workers and ensure they continue to receive assistance during this unprecedented time," said Torres. ***(PR)***

ROBERT T. TORRES, ESQ.
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: 234-7859 | Fax: 234-5750
Attorney for Plaintiff Bernadita Cabrera Palacios

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BERNADITA CABRERA PALACIOS, Plantiff, Vs. HONG DA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, Defendant.) Civil Action No. 20-0003 **SUMMONS**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT, HONG DA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to file any answer you wish to make to the COMPLAIN FOR RECOVERY OF POSSESSION AND DAMAGES PURSUANT TO THE HOLDOVER TENANCY ACT, a copy of which is given to the herewith, within Twenty-One (21) Days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan, MP 96950, or as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Offices of the Clerk of Court, CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Limwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your Attorney and sent to the Clerk of court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgement by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in Complaint.

Dated this 8th day of January, 2021

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

2 senators ask Biden to reconsider 2nd PUA interpretation

The CNMI Senate Democratic Party minority has sought the assistance of U.S. President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in urging the U.S. Department of Labor to reconsider its interpretation that workers with reduced hours are not qualified for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

In a letter to Biden last Friday, Sens. Edith E. Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) said the latest guidance from U.S. Labor is that workers with reduced hours cannot avail of PUA or PFUC under the Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 that was signed into law last Dec. 27, unlike the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

Deleon Guerrero and Manglona said they are working with Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (MP-Ind), who, like Guam Delegate Michael San Nicolas, continues to take the position that workers on reduced hours are impacted by business closures and should continue to avail of PUA.

The senators said that, according to both Sablan and San Nicolas, it certainly was not the intent of U.S. Congress to eliminate these workers from receiving unemployment benefits. They said thousands of laid off and furloughed workers in the CNMI will be affected by this latest guidance from U.S. Labor.

Deleon Guerrero and Manglona said unlike many states, the CNMI does not have unemployment programs for its workers.

With reduced and minimal wages coming in, the people of the CNMI are struggling to make ends meet, the senators said.

Citing that PUA is the only unemployment assistance available and the program will be ending soon, the senators pleaded with Biden to assist the people of the CNMI by reinstating the PUA and PFUC benefits to workers with reduced hours.

Deleon Guerrero and Manglona said the Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 is just an extension of the CARES Act, under which unemployed workers will receive a weekly benefit of up to $345 under the PUA until March 14, 2021, and an additional $300 a week in FPUC.

CNMI Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente informed Sablan in a letter last Wednesday that, with U.S. Labor's recent guidance, thousands of laid-off and furloughed workers in both the private and public sector may not qualify to receive the second PUA. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

SIS student is a Presidential Scholar candidate

Samantha Liske-Clark, a twelfth-grade student at Saipan International School, was named a candidate for the United States Presidential Scholars Program.

Each year, up to 161 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. Students have the opportunity to become U.S. Presidential Scholars based on three paths of accomplishment. The majority of scholars are selected on the broad base of academic achievement.

Liske-Clark is currently ranked No. 1 in her class at SIS and is an AP Capstone Diploma candidate. As a junior, she conducted an independent research project titled, "Comparative Growth Rates of Acropora globiceps in the Saipan Nursery." She received the highest possible score for her work from the College Board. Liske-Clark plans on studying biology after graduating from SIS.

"Every academic experience I've had with Sam I've witnessed a level of thinking that puts her on level with graduate students," said Whitney Altizer, SIS counselor and Liske-Clark's AP Research teacher. "Her ability to question, analyze and make sense of her findings as a high schooler makes me excited to see where she goes from here."

Liske-Clark

"This year, SIS will graduate its third class of AP Capstone Diploma Students and we are confident that Samantha will lead the way. Her commitment to her studies and her dedication to service at SIS and in the CNMI is exemplary," said SIS Headmaster Dr. Ronald Snyder.

If she is named a scholar, Liske-Clark will be honored for her unique accomplishments at a National Recognition Program in Washington, D.C. As a guest of the Department of Education, scholars will receive an expense paid-trip to the Capitol where they will meet with government officials, educators and, ultimately receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by executive order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. ***(PR)***

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- Performs other duties as may be directed by the Finance Director.

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Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on ***Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 8am*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/27/2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
- A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – (Dateline for Public Comments Jan 6, but still accepting)
  1. SB 21 – Medical Assistance – Drug Related Overdose – Prosecution for Possession
  2. SB 21 - Good Samaritan Act (Amendment)
  3. SB 21 – CNMI Drug Overdose Policy (Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication)

VII. Director's Report
- A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – Public Comments
  1. Meeting with House Legislative Committee on Health and Welfare
  2. Financial Report Update
  3. FSMB 2021 House of Delegates Virtual Meeting – Voting Delegate Request - Dateline to Submit: February 26, 2021

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
- A. Governor's Office
  1. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Call
- B. Legislature

X. Old Business
- A. Proposed Regulations with Amendments – Dr. Glenda George
  - ➢ § 140-50.3-4700 – Psychology
  - ➢ § 140-50.3-4900 – Substance Abuse

XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
- A. New Application
  1. Andrew Bertagnolli – Telehealth Clinical Psychology
- B. Renewal Applications

XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
- A. Next Meeting Date
- B. Adjournment of Meeting

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ANTERINA RUBEN ROPON *Petitioner* vs. JERRY SAM JONES *Respondent,*) FCD-PA CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0331 **SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 504942 CK, Saipan MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 13th day of January, 2021

/s/_____
CLERK OF COURT

TREVALLY DERBY
A total of 44 individuals participated in the Kristo Rai Trevally Hunter Derby at a beach near Toyota Microl in San Jose/Oleai last Sunday. Organized by Pacific Islands Club stewarding manager Carlos Ballesteros, the fishing derby is a friendly competition that is open to all nationalities. The goal is to have fun and relax during this COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining the cleanliness of the Garapan Fishing Base and other beaches on the island. With a $5 entry fee, the pot prize is getting bigger as no one has ever caught a trevally yet, also known as talakitok. The fourth derby will resume this coming Sunday, from 6am to 2pm, at the same beach near Toyota Microl.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

NMC is again home to Small Business Development Center

To continue to strengthen its efforts in promoting economic development and in advancing entrepreneurial activities in the CNMI, the CNMI Small Business Development Center is now hosted at the Northern Marianas College.

The SBDC, led by SBDC director Nicole Babauta, aims to support the growth and economic development in the CNMI by providing high quality training and one-on-one confidential counseling to small businesses and to small business start-ups.

"We are happy to be once again hosting the SBDC at NMC," said Frankie Eliptico, interim NMC president. "The SBDC was at the college many years ago and then it was hosted at the CNMI Department of Commerce, where it continued to grow. Now it is back home at its original home at NMC."

Eliptico said that having the SBDC back at NMC will also help promote entrepreneurial initiatives at the college and among NMC students.

In the past three years, the SBDC was awarded Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network's Center of the Year, Saipan Chamber Member of the Year, and a SBA five-year Reaccreditation.

Babauta was also recognized for her work at the SBDC. In 2019, she was awarded the National America's SBDC State Star Award and in 2020 was named the Saipan Young Professional of the Year by the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Since 2017, the CNMI SBDC has been able to provide more than $6.3 million in capital infusion to businesses, and hosted 93 training events with more than 1,400 participants in total.

To access CNMI SBDC, visit NMC's Building P on NMC's As Terlaje campus or visit NMC's campuses on Tinian and Rota for assistance. Or, email cnmisbdc@pacificsbdc.com or call 237-6888.

SBDC also offers free webinar trainings. A calendar with upcoming training dates can be found at www.pacificsbdc.com. ***(NMC)***

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We knew vaccines were coming four months ago. Why wasn't America ready to quickly give them out?

It's been 13 months since China shut down a region of 18 million people because of the rapid human-to-human transfer of a new strain of coronavirus. It's been a year since the World Health Organization declared a global health emergency because of the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19, the disease it causes. It's been 11 months since California's Gavin Newsom became the first governor to order a statewide lockdown. It's been eight months since the U.S. recorded its first 100,000 deaths from the pandemic. And it's been four months since Dr. Anthony Fauci—the federal government's leading infectious disease expect—expressed optimism that effective vaccines would soon be available.

Against this backdrop, it is stunning that local, state and federal authorities have had a poor start getting vaccines approved two months ago into the arms of Americans. This week, Fauci said 70% to 85% of the U.S. population should be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before the U.S. can "get back to normal." Only about 2% of Americans are fully vaccinated now, and another 6% are partially vaccinated. The road remains long.

This is an unprecedented high-stakes vaccination effort involving multiple government bureaucracies, with distance learning, economic hardship and family separations wreaking havoc on all of our health. History will record that humanity rose to the occasion on the hardest part of the effort—getting vaccines approved and ready for arms in record time—but bungled the easier part—the logistics. January saw record COVID-19 deaths in the United States (a trailing indicator, to be sure)—but January also saw more than half the vaccinations supplied to states in storage, not being administered.

Israel, on the other hand, has used every vaccine available on a daily basis and loosened eligibility rules at the end of the day to prevent unfrozen doses from being wasted. The nation's policy was adopted before the vaccines even became available.

Meanwhile, in the U.S. and in California, the rollout has been erratic and problematic, with communities of color disproportionately suffering from the disease but being vaccinated less than White Americans and plans shifting on who should get vaccinated when. Much could've been settled on earlier.

Amid America's ongoing conversation about systemic racism, it is inconceivable that Black and Latino residents of San Diego County have gotten vaccines at less than half their proportion of the population. The local NAACP is right to see this as one more example of American apathy about the well-being of people of color. Our leaders need to do much better on this and so many related issues.

In conversations countywide and countrywide, people are offering ideas that might—and still could—improve the vaccination process: mobile distribution centers that could deliver vaccines to housebound and other seniors, express lanes

See VACCINES on Next Page

WE MAY HAVE TO CONVERT THAT PALACE INTO A PRISON IF WE KEEP ARRESTING NAVALNY'S SUPPORTERS...
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All signs point to vaccine success against COVID-19

By KEVIN PHAM
The Heritage Foundation

Kevin Pham, M.D., is a visiting policy analyst in domestic policy studies at The Heritage Foundation.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective? The early evidence is very encouraging. After the vaccine distributions began in December, we have seen a marked and sustained decline in hospitalizations in America for most of January.

COVID testing rates have been fluctuating for the past several months, probably due to the holiday season and inclement weather, so hospitalizations are currently a better gauge of the pandemic situation in America.

On Jan. 6, America hit a record high, with 132,474 current hospitalizations, according to the COVID Tracking Project. Since then, we have seen three straight weeks of decreasing hospitalizations. That portends real progress against the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are several possible explanations for this downturn in hospitalizations, all of them likely contributing to it.

First, the holiday travel season is over, so the increased socialization of the holidays can no longer contribute to COVID cases. It should be noted, however, that the current spike in cases began in late September, well before the holidays.

Second, all spikes eventually come to end, even if the pandemic has not ended. This phenomenon occurred after the initial spike in the spring of 2020. That tapered off until summer, which saw a spike that peaked in July but tapered off until September. The spike that occurred in the fall, which appears to be tapering off now, has been the longest and most severe one. And it is only natural that it should begin to decline at some point.

Or third: the vaccines have begun to have a real effect on the course of the pandemic.

In the United States, there are currently two vaccines authorized, the Pfizer vaccine that was authorized Dec. 12, and the Moderna vaccine that was authorized Dec. 18. That not one, but two vaccines are now available to the American people is an unmitigated good and a testament to the success of Operation Warp Speed and the innovative power of private industry.

Both of these vaccines require two doses several weeks apart for the full effect: three weeks for the Pfizer vaccine and four for the Moderna one. The Pfizer vaccine had a demonstrated 95% efficacy one week after the second dose, and the Moderna vaccine had a similarly high efficacy, 94.5% two weeks after its second dose, against COVID-19 illness of any severity.

Both vaccines demonstrated 100% efficacy against severe COVID-19. That is, in both trials, zero persons who received the vaccine developed severe disease and needed hospitalization.

Thus, given that the Pfizer vaccine was authorized on Dec. 12, with injections beginning on the Dec. 13, the first Pfizer vaccine recipients would have benefited from its 95% efficacy by Jan. 10. By similar considerations, the first Moderna vaccine recipients would have started benefiting from its 94.5% efficacy by Jan. 30.

As the percent efficacy is an illustration of the degree of protection from the reaction of the body's immune system, all vaccine recipients would have incrementally increasing immunity from the virus within days of their first injections.

As a case in point, the Pfizer data showed that one week after the first dose, the vaccine demonstrated approximately 50% efficacy in preventing COVID-19. Thus, the Pfizer vaccine would have begun having a protective effect during Christmas week.

In other words, it is very likely that the sharp and sustained drop-off in hospitalizations at this time is due in large part to protection conferred by the authorized vaccines.

It is also significant that every state vaccination priority plan has placed health care workers, the elderly, and nursing home residents at the top. The elderly, especially those residing in nursing homes, have been particularly vulnerable to infection, severe disease, and death.

Therefore, vaccinating them first will protect the most vulnerable and preserve the most life.

In addition to hospitalizations, death rates have appeared to plateau as well, although these rates fluctuate in large part due to inconsistent reporting. Deaths should be expected to decline because mortality is generally driven by the complications of severe COVID manifestation.

If hospitalizations, cases and deaths continue to decline, it will likely be the vaccines' effect. The vaccines have long been anticipated to break definitively the grip of COVID-19 on society. Whether this is truly the end of COVID remains to be seen, but the vaccines are out, the timing makes sense and all the evidence points to the success of America's race to the vaccine.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

CNMI probate: 12 things an executor should do

FINE PRINT

By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jordan Sundell is a lawyer. His practice primarily focuses on business, real estate, estate planning, and asset protec*tion. You can find his columns here every other Tuesday as well as on The Fine Print on Facebook. You can contact Mr. Sundell via this newspaper at editor@saipantribune.com or 235-6397/235-2440.*

Probate is no one's idea of a good time. After all, probate is only necessary when someone you care about has passed away. But taking care of it right away eliminates plenty of the problems that tend to metastasize over years and decades of delay.

The key person in this process is the executor (if there was a will) or the administrator (if there was no will). Normally the executor will be named in the will and asked to carry out the deceased person's final wishes. It's an honor. But it also comes with a variety of duties. Below are 10 common ones.

First, secure the deceased person's estate. For example, you may need to house sit or hire someone to do so because criminals often target the homes of people who have recently passed away. And don't forget family and friends: It's not unprecedented for them to stop by the house and help themselves to items that they don't have the right to take. After that, you'll need collect mail, arrange for yard maintenance, and cancel subscriptions such as phone, internet, cable, utilities, and so on.

Second, get several copies of the deceased person's death certificate from the hospital. You'll need them for a variety of tasks, including to start the probate, change ownership of joint accounts, and receive date-of-death values for the deceased person's investments.

Third, obtain a copy of the will. Then notify the listed beneficiaries of the deceased person's passing. And don't forget to tell close relatives that the will designated you as the executor.

Fourth, notify the Social Security Administration of the death. But before doing so, check with the funeral home because they sometimes take care of this notification.

Fifth, create an inventory of the estate's assets and debts. The ease (or difficulty) of this process will depend on the size of the estate and the quality of the deceased person's recordkeeping. If the estate is small and the records clear, then the process will be simple. But if the estate is large and the records sporadic, then expect to expend a good deal of time playing detective.

Sixth, once you know the estate's debts, notify creditors of the death. Often such notification will halt the debt from accruing further interest. It will also help you verify the final balance.

Seventh, if the deceased person has a life-insurance policy, retirement accounts, or other investment accounts, then contact those institutions and arrange for payouts. When doing so, coordinate with the beneficiaries under those plans because often the money will go directly to a named individual (such as a spouse, child, or charity) rather than to the estate.

Eighth, set up a bank account in the estate's name. And then use that account to pay bills and collect any income generated by the estate's assets.

Ninth, evaluate which assets must go through probate and then work with an attorney to begin the process. Don't just assume that the asset will need to go through probate because some assets can bypass probate. For example, life-insurance payouts and the money in a deceased person's retirement accounts will get distributed according to the beneficiary-designation forms filled out when the accounts were created, not according to the will.

Tenth, pay the estate's taxes (if any). These taxes can come in two forms: Estate tax and income tax. Few estates need to worry about the estate tax. In 2020, for example, only estates valued at more than $11.58 million were subject to the estate tax. But many more estates need to think about income tax because it applies if one of the estate's beneficiaries is a nonresident alien or if the estate generated gross income of $600 or more. So, for instance, if the estate has rental property, then the estate will likely need to file a tax return.

Eleventh, pay debts and distribute assets. These payments will follow the directions of the probate court, which will issue one or more decrees of distribution memorializing who is entitled to what and how much.

Finally, once all debts have been paid and assets distributed, close the estate and celebrate the end of a job well done.

Hopefully this checklist helps. But it's not exhaustive. Other items may be necessary depending on your particular circumstances. So, in addition to keeping in mind the items listed above, also consider speaking with an experienced attorney about your situation.

The pandemic relief challenge ahead: Ending it

By NOAH SMITH
Bloomberg Opinion

Noah Smith is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist. He was an assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University, and he blogs at Noahpinion.*

How and when to phase out COVID-19 relief programs is one of the most difficult policy problems that the Biden administration will have to solve. Eventually the virus will be vanquished, and the U.S. government won't be able to keep large swathes of its economy on life support forever. Each relief program presents its own challenges in a phase-out.

The simplest will be the quasi-universal checks. That's because they're really just a series of ad-hoc spending measures, limited by income to a part of the population. President Joe Biden is already having trouble with his push for $1,400 checks, so expect this to be the last round unless the pandemic comes roaring back. Down the road, maybe memories of the relief checks will increase support for policies like universal basic income, but for now this is a program that will phase itself out—though possibly too soon.

Pandemic unemployment benefits are another matter. Once COVID-19 is under control, the bulked-up payments—which Biden would keep at $400 a week per person through the end of September—will need to be phased out. As long as everyone knows that the benefits are only temporary, the payouts won't discourage many people from working, since retaining a job is better than collecting checks for a few months and then still being unemployed after benefits expire. But if people think the extra money will be extended indefinitely, some might drop out of the labor force. So there has to be a clearly broadcast sunset to the program.

One good indicator of when it's safe to phase out the program will be the number of customers returning to eat at restaurants, tracked by the reservations website OpenTable. This data currently shows how depressed the economy still is.

When the restaurant scene begins to revive, it's time to start phasing out the pandemic unemployment bonus. Normal unemployment benefits will suffice for a normal recession, and eligibility can be extended if the economy fails to bounce back rapidly.

Government support for businesses—which has already shrunk, and which features less prominently in Biden's plan than in previous bills—will also need a carefully considered phase-out. Though some pandemic-stricken businesses will bounce back, others will never be viable again, and we shouldn't waste money trying to keep them alive. Perhaps people will decide they're perfectly happy staying at home to watch movies on Netflix and Amazon Prime, leaving movie theaters to wither away. In that case, companies like AMC Entertainment Holdings Inc. will probably have to be wound down. Or perhaps commercial property developers will be thinned out if the shift to remote work turns out to be permanent.

If nonviable businesses that fall victim to long-term demand shifts are sustained with cheap loans, it could lead the U.S. to repeat Japan's experience with "zombie" companies in the 1990s. In that country, steady flows of below-market bank loans kept a bunch of doomed businesses on life support, sucking resources away from healthier businesses. The U.S. economy can't afford that loss of dynamism, so business-support programs should be wound down at about the same rate as the unemployment premium. Don't worry—new businesses will spring up to replace the ones that die.

That leaves the thorniest issue of all: Evictions. So far, a long-predicted wave of evictions has been held at bay by a patchy system of federal and state moratoriums. Biden's plan would extend these through the end of September, delaying the inevitable reckoning.

In fact, a surprising number of Americans have been able to keep paying their rent through the pandemic, thanks to the government's generous relief bills:

But even a couple percentage points of decrease represents millions of Americans who haven't been paying rent—either because they were unable to, or because they chose to delay rent payments in the hope of a negotiated reduction after the pandemic. And a far bigger total number of households may have missed one or two payments over the last year.

Some taxpayers will inevitably balk at the idea of some renters' getting a pass on paying back rent. After all, that might reward a few people who could have paid but chose not to! But logistically, there's just no feasible way for the government to figure out whether people missed rent because they were unable to pay, or unwilling. So in the interests of not kicking millions of Americans into the street, we're going to have to encourage landlords to negotiate settlements with their tenants.

The easiest way to do this is with a financial incentive. Landlords who negotiate partial reductions in back rent should get at least some of that reimbursed by the government. After all, landlords are taxpayers, too, and though landlording is and should be an inherently risky endeavor, some partial bailout as part of an incentive program for negotiated settlements would smooth out this looming upheaval.

All of these relief programs were important in helping sustain our economy and our population through the dark days of the pandemic. As we finally begin to contemplate life without COVID-19, we should also be planning for the end of these programs with a thoughtful, orderly wind-down.

VACCINES

From Page 8

at mass vaccination sites for the elderly, an organized system of volunteers who can safely drive people to sites, a massive public relations campaign across every medium of diverse groups of people touting the benefits of—and receiving—shots. Yet government agencies struggle with lines and complaints.

User-friendly websites to schedule vaccinations should have been set up long ago. The concept of vaccination "superstations" at stadiums and college parking lots should have also been in place well before vaccines arrived. The fact that the most at-risk group—older people with preexisting health conditions—may also be the least tech-savvy should have been addressed by getting them information through AMBER Alert-style phone messages and mail or notes sent through utility bills.

Much has been made—properly so—of the failure of the George W. Bush administration to stop Osama bin Laden's terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. The attacks killed 3,000 Americans. This week, the pandemic death toll topped 450,000—150 times as many deaths as from 9/11. Hundreds of thousands more could die. This requires a reckoning. But first this requires a better job being done, immediately.

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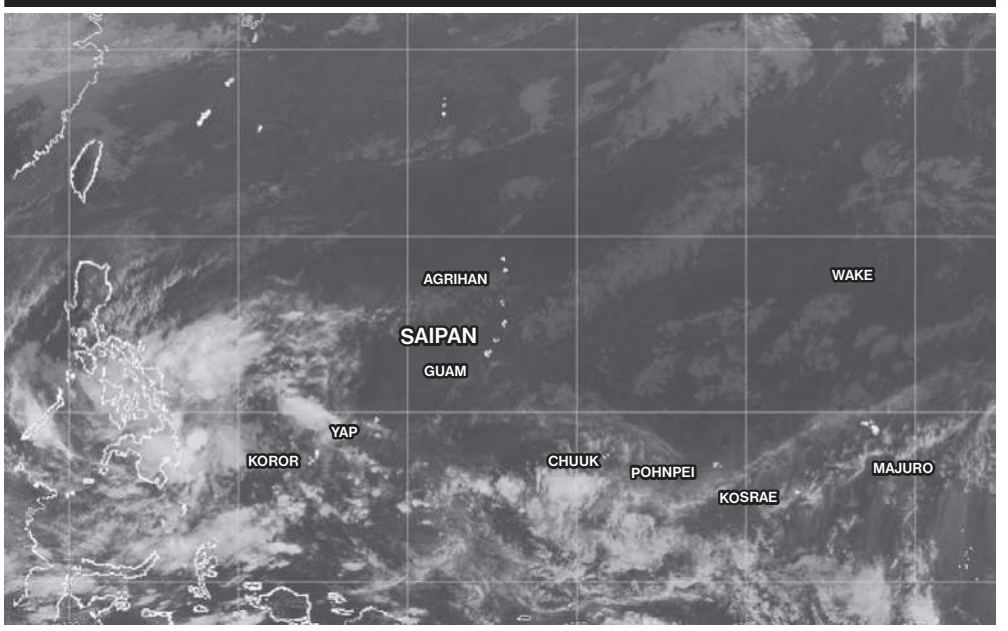
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º	86º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:50 AM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

East to northeast winds prevail over the Marianas this morning. Satellite imagery show only a few showers over the area.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	84º / 76º
Palau	Thunderstorm	85º / 78º
Yap	Thunderstorm	84º / 78º
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86º / 80º
Pohnpei	Cloudy	85º / 80º
Kosrae	Cloudy	85º / 80º
Majuro	Thunderstorm	83º / 79º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	4:25 AM	3:53 PM	-
Wednesday	5:22 AM	4:52 PM	-
Thursday	6:14 AM	5:51 PM	-
Friday	7:01 AM	6:46 PM	-
Saturday	7:44 AM	7:39 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	73º / 61º
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	41º / 21º
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70º / 57º
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	80º / 64º
London	Cloudy	39º / 30º
Los Angeles	Showers	63º / 57º
Manila	Partly Cloudy	86º / 72º
Melbourne	Sunny	93º / 75º
Miami	Sunny	81º / 67º
New York	Rain	50º / 47º
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	46º / 36º
Paris	Showers	50º / 36º
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	48º / 34º
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61º / 39º
Salem	Partly Cloudy	73º / 51º
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	43º / 32º
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	37º / 19º
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	52º / 36º
Washington, DC	Rain	66º / 57º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
7:17 AM	High Tide	1.68
12:24 PM	Low Tide	1.13
5:08 PM	High Tide	1.72
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
SC-1 cart manufactured by Sony Corp.

Docomo Pacific tests driverless concept

SC-1 Live Demonstration Team. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

» Vehicle powered by 5G Network

TAMUNING, Guam—Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, tests new driverless concept cart "SC-1" (manufactured by Sony Corp.), powered by Docomo Pacific 5G.

The New Concept Cart SC-1, which leverages 5G mobile technologies for various remotely controlled functions, was remotely driven from a cockpit in Japan, over 1500 miles away from Guam. The demonstration was conducted using Docomo Pacific's 5G network and is part of the Docomo 5G Open Lab Guam project. Results of the trial will be used to verify data transmission and operational performance required to remotely control the cart from a long distance via the extra-high speed, large capacity, low latency and massive-device connectivity of Docomo Pacific's First to 5G network.

The New Concept Cart SC-1 is a highly conceptual vehicle that incorporates artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics technologies developed by Sony. Image sensors that exceed human vision are mounted on the vehicle's front, rear and both sides to provide the remote driver with high-quality video of the surrounding area. High-quality video is also presented to on-board passengers, for example, as if they are viewing the surrounding areas through windows. The SC-1 boasts 4K digital-sign panels on its exterior that can be used to display advertisements and other content in high-quality resolution making it an ideal moving billboard. The video showcasing our live demonstration can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sYRmek7KpI&feature=youtu.be

"The live demonstration has been a result of NTT DOCOMO's strong partnership with Sony Corp. Today was an astounding success of showcasing how, through our 5G network, the driverless cart was remotely controlled from Japan. We will continue to conduct research on the future opportunities made available through this technology," said Docomo Pacific Transport Network director Shingo Aihara.

"Docomo Pacific is the first and only telecommunication services provider in the Marianas to offer 5G. Customers can try our 5G network today on the Apple iPhone 12 series and Samsung Galaxy S20 series handsets. Our current 5G hotspots spots for Guam are at Skinner Plaza and at Ypao Beach Park. On Saipan, at Paseo de Marianas," said Docomo Pacific Marketing, Enterprise Business Unit director Nathan Denight.

About Sony Corp.

Sony Corp. is a leading manufacturer of audio, video, imaging, game, communications, key device and information technology products for the consumer and professional markets. With its music, pictures, computer entertainment and online businesses, Sony is uniquely positioned to be the leading electronics and entertainment company in the world. Sony Global Web Site: www.sony.net.

About Docomo Pacific

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT DOCOMO, Japan's leading mobile operator. Headquartered in Tamuning, Guam, Docomo Pacific is the largest provider of personal, residential, enterprise connectivity and entertainment services in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Named Guam's most reliable network, based on GWS' 2019 OneScore ranking. We are also the five-time winner of Pika's Best of Guam and four-time winner of Best of The Pacific. DOCOMO PACIFIC is dedicated to bringing you and your family closer to the things that matter most. Get to know more about what makes us "Better Together" at www.docomopacific.com. ***(PR)***

Yellen: Biden's plan could restore full employment by 2022

WASHINGTON (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Sunday the country was still in a "deep hole" with millions of lost jobs but that President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion relief plan could generate enough growth to restore full employment by next year.

Republican senators argued that Biden's proposal was too expensive and they cited criticism from Larry Summers, a treasury secretary under President Bill Clinton, that passage of the measure could run the risk of triggering runaway inflation. Summers also contended that Biden's plan would make less money available for other initiatives such as improving the nation's infrastructure.

Yellen, a former Federal Reserve chair who is the first woman to lead the Treasury Department, said the central bank had the tools to handle any potential inflationary threat. She said the urgent need now is to deal with the problems raised by the pandemic-induced recession: joblessness, lost small businesses and reopening schools.

"We face a huge economic challenge here and tremendous suffering in the country. We have got to address that," Yellen said. "That's the biggest risk."

The House and Senate this past week approved the legislation necessary to pass Biden's package through a process known as reconciliation, which only requires 51 votes in the Senate. The Senate is split 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris the tiebreaking vote.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has said she said she hopes to approve the specific budget details of the Biden proposal over the next two weeks, aiming to get the measure through Congress before current unemployment benefits run out in mid-March.

House Democrats plan to propose boosting the child tax credit, now at a maximum of $2,000, to as much as $3,600 per child annually, according to information obtained Sunday by The Associated Press. The proposal will be part of the COVID-19 relief bill they are writing that is expected to largely follow Biden's plan.

The House Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction over about half of Biden's $1.9 trillion proposal, including support for workers, the jobless and people's health care costs. The committee's Democrats were expected to release their full plan Monday.

The child tax credit increase is expected to help about 20 million lower-earning people. The Democrats' bill will follow Biden's proposal to increase the child credit to up to $3,600 for each child under age 6 and as much as $3,000 for those up to 17.

Under the House Democrats' plan, those amounts would begin to phase out for individual parents earning $75,000 yearly and couples making $150,000. All families would receive the full amount, even if they owe no federal income taxes, and payments to families would be made monthly.

Weary postal workers hope Biden will bring new tone, change

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—The U.S. Postal Service's stretch of challenges didn't end with the November general election and tens of millions of mail-in votes. The pandemic-depleted workforce fell further into a hole during the holiday rush, leading to long hours and a mountain of delayed mail.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has vowed to make improvements after facing withering criticism and calls for his removal for his actions that slowed delivery of mail before the election. Some critics hoped President Joe Biden would fire DeJoy, but a president can't do that. Instead, Biden could and likely will use appointments to reshape the Board of Governors, which meets Tuesday for the first time since his election.

It's unclear how swiftly Biden's administration will move. A White House spokesperson declined to comment on upcoming appointments.

Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, said he's hoping for some "bold appointments" by Biden.

"We want a Board of Governors that understands fundamentally this is not called the United States Postal Business," he said. "It's not a profit-making business. It's here to serve the people."

A change in tone, at the least, would be welcomed by postal workers after former President Donald Trump called the Postal Service "a joke" last year in criticizing business practices that led to a growing operating deficit.

Despite the pandemic, on-time rates for first-class mail topped 90% for most of the year until DeJoy took office in June and began instituting changes that raised concerns about the delivery of mail-in election ballots. Workers decried DeJoy for limiting overtime and late or extra trips, resulting in delayed mail, and the dismantling of sorting machines ahead of the election.

All told, the Postal Service successfully delivered more than 130 million ballots to and from voters during the general election.

But by the time Christmas arrived, it had gotten so bad that more than a third of first-class mail was late, a dismal performance, even though DeJoy had backtracked on some of his changes by then.

At the holiday peak, tractor-trailers chock full of mail were left idling outside some postal-sorting facilities across the country because there was no room inside. Packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs. Delays grew by days, and then weeks.

A number of factors contributed to the nightmare.

Americans were using the Postal Service at unprecedented level because of the pandemic. Overtime couldn't make up for the impact of postal workers' COVID-19 illnesses and quarantines. Commercial flights that transport mail operated on reduced schedules. And FedEx and UPS dumped packages on the Postal Service when they reached their limit.

Nation

AP

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., leaves the chamber after taking an oath and voting on how to proceed on the impeachment against former President Donald Trump, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021.

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT TRIAL to open with sense of urgency, speed

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial is opening this week with a sense of urgency — by Democrats who want to hold the former president accountable for the violent U.S. Capitol siege and Republicans who want it over as fast as possible.

Scheduled to begin Tuesday, just over a month since the deadly riot, the proceedings are expected to diverge from the lengthy, complicated trial that resulted in Trump's acquittal a year ago on charges that he privately pressured Ukraine to dig up dirt on a Democratic rival, Joe Biden, now the president. This time, Trump's Jan. 6 rally cry to "fight like hell" and the storming of the Capitol played out for the world to see. While Trump very well could be acquitted again, the trial could be over in half the time.

Details of the proceedings are still being negotiated by the Senate leaders, with the duration of opening arguments, senators' questions and deliberations all up for debate.

So far, it appears there will be few witnesses called, as the prosecutors and defense attorneys speak directly to senators who have been sworn to deliver "impartial justice" as jurors. Most are also witnesses to the siege, having fled for safety that day as the rioters broke into the Capitol and temporarily halted the electoral count certifying Biden's victory.

Defense attorneys for Trump declined a request for him to testify. Holed up at his Mar-a-Lago club, the former president has been silenced on social media by Twitter without public comments since leaving the White House,

Instead, House managers prosecuting the case are expected to rely on the trove of videos from the siege, along with Trump's incendiary rhetoric refusing to concede the election, to make their case. His new defense team has said it plans to counter with its own cache of videos of Democratic politicians making fiery speeches.

"We have the unusual circumstance where on the very first day of the trial, when those managers walk on the floor of the Senate, there will already be over 100 witnesses present," said Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who led Trump's first impeachment. "Whether you need additional witnesses will be a strategic call."

Trump is the first president to be twice impeached, and the only one to face trial after leaving the White House. The Democratic-led House approved a sole charge, "incitement of insurrection," acting swiftly one week after the riot, the most violent attack on Congress in more than 200 years. Five people died including a woman shot by police inside the building and a police officer who died of injuries the next day.

Democrats argue it's not only about winning conviction, but holding the former president accountable for his actions, even though he's out of office. For Republicans, the trial will test their political loyalty to Trump and his enduring grip on the GOP.

Initially repulsed by the graphic images of the siege, Republican senators including Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell denounced the violence and pointed a finger of blame at Trump. But in recent weeks GOP senators have rallied around Trump arguing his comments do not make him responsible for the violence. They question the legitimacy of even conducting a trial of someone no longer in office.

On Sunday, Republican Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi described Trump's impeachment trial as a "meaningless messaging partisan exercise." Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky called the proceedings a farce with "zero chance of conviction" and described Trump's language and rally words as "figurative" speech.

Senators were sworn in as jurors late last month, shortly after Biden was inaugurated, but the trial proceedings were delayed as Democrats focused on confirming the new president's initial Cabinet picks and Republicans sought to put as much distance as possible from the bloody riot.

At the time, Paul forced a vote to set aside the trial as unconstitutional because Trump is no longer in office, drawing 44 other Republicans to his argument.

A prominent conservative lawyer, Charles Cooper, rejects that view, writing in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece Sunday that the Constitution permits the Senate to try an ex-official, a significant counterpoint to that of Republican senators who have looked toward acquittal by advancing constitutional claims.

Cheney says she won't quit the House after Wyoming censure

WASHINGTON (AP)—Rep. Liz Cheney, the third-ranking House GOP leader, said Sunday she was undeterred by a censure from Wyoming Republicans and criticism from some House colleagues over her vote to impeach Donald Trump, and will not resign or back off her repudiation of the former president.

Cheney said the oath she took to the Constitution compelled her vote for impeachment, "and it doesn't bend to partisanship, it doesn't bend to political pressure."

She suggested that if she were in the Senate, she might vote to convict Trump over his role in the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol. Trump's trial in the Senate begins Tuesday.

"I would listen to the testimony—I would listen to the evidence," Cheney told "Fox News Sunday." "I obviously believe and did then that what we already know is enough for his impeachment. What we already know does constitute the gravest violation of his oath of office by any president in the history of the country, and this is not something that we can simply look past or pretend didn't happen or try to move on."

"We've got to make sure this never happens again," she said.

On Saturday, the Wyoming Republican Party voted overwhelmingly to censure Cheney. Only eight of the 74-member state GOP's central committee opposed the punishment in a vote that did not proceed to a formal count. The censure document accused Cheney of voting to impeach Trump, even though the House didn't offer him "formal hearing or due process."

That followed a 145-61 secret-ballot vote this past week in the nation's capital in which House Republicans overwhelmingly rebuffed a rebellion by hard-right conservatives to toss Cheney from leadership over her impeachment vote.

"We need to honor President Trump. All President Trump did was call for a peaceful assembly and protest for a fair and audited election," said Darin Smith, a Cheyenne, Wyoming, attorney who lost to Cheney in the Republican primary for the House seat in 2016. "The Republican Party needs to put her on notice."

US moves to rejoin UN rights council, reversing Trump anew

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration is set to announce this week that it will reengage with the much-maligned U.N. Human Rights Council that former President Donald Trump withdrew from almost three years ago, U.S. officials said Sunday. The decision reverses another Trump-era move away from multilateral organizations and agreements.

U..S. officials say Secretary of State Antony Blinken and a senior U.S. diplomat in Geneva will announce on Monday that Washington will return to the Geneva-based body as an observer with an eye toward seeking election as a full member. The decision is likely to draw criticism from conservative lawmakers and many in the pro-Israel community.

Trump pulled out of the world body's main human rights agency in 2018 due to its disproportionate focus on Israel, which has received by far the largest number of critical council resolutions against any country, as well as the number of authoritarian countries among its members and because it failed to meet an extensive list of reforms demanded by then-U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

In addition to the council's persistent focus on Israel, the Trump administration took issue with the body's membership, which currently includes China, Cuba, Eritrea, Russia and Venezuela, all of which have been accused of human rights abuses.

One senior U.S. official said the Biden administration believed the council must still reform but that the best way to promote change is to "engage with it in a principled fashion." The official said it can be "an important forum for those fighting tyranny and injustice around the world" and the U.S. presence intends to "ensure it can live up to that potential."

That official and three others familiar with the decision were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly ahead of the announcement, and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Although the U.S. will have only nonvoting observer status on the council through the end of 2021, the officials said the administration intends to seek one of three full member seats—currently held by Austria, Denmark and Italy—from the "Western Europe and other states group" that come up for election later this year.

The U.N. General Assembly makes the final choice in a vote that generally takes place in October every year to fill vacancies in three-year terms at the 47-member-state council.

Asia

Blocked internet access restored in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—As enthusiastic crowds of tens of thousands marched through the streets of Myanmar's biggest city on Sunday to protest last week's coup ousting Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government, their spirits were lifted by the return of internet services that had been blocked a day earlier.

Separate protests that began in various parts of Yangon converged at Sule Pagoda, situated in the center of a roundabout in the city's downtown area. Protesters chanted "Long live Mother Suu" and "Down with military dictatorship." Protesters in other parts of the country echoed their calls.

Authorities had cut access to the internet as the protests grew Saturday, fanning fears of a complete information blackout. On Sunday afternoon, however, internet users in Yangon reported that data access on their mobile phones had suddenly been restored.

The demonstrators are seeking to roll back last Monday's seizure of power by the military and demanding the release from detention of Suu Kyi, the country's ousted leader, and other top figures from her National League for Democracy party.

The military has accused Suu Kyi's government of failing to act on its complaints that last November's election was marred by fraud, though the election commission said it had found no evidence to support the claims.

The growing protests are a sharp reminder of the long and bloody struggle for democracy in a country that the military ruled directly for more than five decades before loosening its grip in 2012. Suu Kyi's government, which won a landslide election in 2015, was the first led by civilians in decades, though it faced a number of curbs to its power under a military-drafted constitution.

During Myanmar's years of isolation under military rule, the golden-domed Sule Pagoda served as a rallying point for political protests calling for democracy, most notably in during a massive 1988 uprising and again during a 2007 revolt led by Buddhist monks.

The military used to deadly force to end both of those uprisings, with estimates of hundreds if not thousands killed in 1988. While riot police have been sent to watch the protests this past week, soldiers have been absent and there have been no reports of clashes.

Several videos posted online Sunday that were said to be from the town of Myawaddy, on Myanmar's eastern border with Thailand, showed police shooting into the air in an evident effort to disperse a crowd. There were no signs of panic and no reports of injuries.

Showing little fear, protest crowds have grown bigger and bolder in recent days, while remaining nonviolent in support of a call by Suu Kyi's party and its allies for civil disobedience.

In one of Sunday's gatherings, at least 2,000 labor union and student activists and members of the public gathered at a major intersection near Yangon University. They marched along a main road, snarling traffic. Drivers honked their horns in support.

Police in riot gear blocked the main entrance to the university. Two water cannon trucks were parked nearby.

The mostly young protesters held placards calling for freedom for Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, who were put under house arrest and charged with minor offenses, seen by many as providing a legal veneer for their detention.

140 are missing after glacier breaks in India's Himalayas

RISHIKESH, India (AP)—Indian rescue crews struggled to reach trapped victims Sunday after part of a glacier in the Himalayas broke off and released a torrent of water and debris that slammed into two hydroelectric plants. At least nine people were killed and 140 were missing in a disaster experts said appeared to point to global warming.

Video from India's northern state of Uttarakhand showed the muddy, concrete-gray floodwaters tumbling through a valley and surging into a dam, breaking it into pieces with little resistance before roaring on downstream. The flood turned the countryside into what looked like an ash-colored moonscape.

More than 2,000 members of the military, paramilitary groups and police took part in the search-and-rescue operation, including soldiers expert in mountaineering, working into the night under bright halogen lights, authorities said.

The flood was caused when a portion of Nanda Devi glacier snapped off in the morning, releasing water trapped behind it, authorities said. It rushed down the mountain and into other bodies of water, forcing the evacuation of many villages along the banks of the Alaknanda and Dhauliganga rivers.

A hydroelectric plant on the Alaknanda was destroyed, and a plant under construction on the Dhauliganga was damaged, said Vivek Pandey, a spokesman for the paramilitary Indo Tibetan Border Police. Flowing out of the Himalayan mountains, the two rivers meet before merging with the Ganges River.

Pandey said at least 42 workers were trapped in two tunnels at the Dhauliganga project. Twelve were rescued from one of the tunnels, while at least 30 others remained stranded inside the other, he said.

"The rescuers used ropes and shovels to reach the mouth of the tunnel. They dug through the debris and entered the tunnel. They are yet to come in touch with the stranded people," said Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, Uttarakhand's top elected official.

An additional 140 workers at the two plants were missing, Pandey said. Surjeet Singh, a police official, said at least nine bodies were recovered.

The Himalayan area has a chain of hydropower projects on several rivers and their tributaries. Rawat said authorities were able to save other power units downstream because of timely action taken to release water by opening gates.

The floodwaters also damaged houses, said Ravi Bejaria, a government spokesman, though he had no details on the number and whether any of the residents were injured, missing or dead.

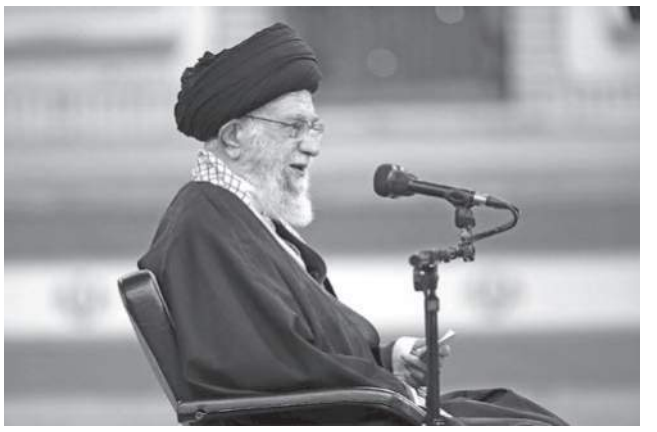
"It all started sometime around 10 in the morning. We heard a bang, which shook our village," Dinesh Negi, a resident of Raini village, told The Associated Press by phone. He said they watched from high above one of the rivers as the water turned muddy and surged in a torrent.

"We knew something wrong had happened," Negi said. "We could see the fury of the river."

World

BEFORE IT LIVES UP TO NUKE DEAL

Iran: US must lift sanctions



AP

In this picture released by the official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with army's air force and air defense staff in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021.

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's supreme leader on Sunday urged the United States to lift all sanctions if it wants Iran to live up to commitments under its nuclear deal with world powers, state TV reported, but President Joe Biden says the U.S. won't be making the first move.

"If (the U.S.) wants Iran to return to its commitments, it must lift all sanctions in practice, then we will do verification … then we will return to our commitments," state TV quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying, in his first comments on the matter since Biden took office.

Biden rejected the idea in a "CBS Evening News" interview taped Friday and airing Sunday.

He was asked if the US will lift sanctions first in order to get Iran back to the bargaining table.

"No," Biden replied. He was then asked if Iran has to stop enriching uranium first. Biden nodded.

Former President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. in 2018 from the atomic deal, which saw Iran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Biden has said he will seek to revive the deal, but insisted that Iran must first reverse its nuclear steps, creating a contest of wills between the nations.

"This is the definitive and irreversible policy of the Islamic Republic, and all of the country's officials are unanimous on this, and no one will deviate from it," Khamenei added Sunday, reiterating Iranian leaders' previous remarks that the U.S. must ease its sanctions before Iran comes back into compliance.

The supreme leader, 81, has the final say on all matters of state in Iran and approved the efforts at reaching the nuclear deal in 2015.

In response to Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, the country began to gradually violate its atomic commitments, and threatened further provocations in a bid to increase its leverage and get Biden to prioritize a return to the deal as he moves to dismantle Trump's legacy. Biden has signed a series of executive actions that reverse course on a wide range of issues, including climate change and immigration.

Following the killing last December of an Iranian scientist credited with spearheading the country's disbanded military nuclear program, Iran's parliament approved a law to block international nuclear inspectors later this month—a serious violation of the accord.

Iran also has begun enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels and said it would experiment with uranium metals, a key component of a nuclear warhead. The country has announced its moves and insisted that all breaches of the pact are easily reversible. Tehran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

South Africa suspends AstraZeneca vaccine drive

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—South Africa has suspended plans to inoculate its front-line health care workers with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine after a small clinical trial suggested that it isn't effective in preventing mild to moderate illness from the variant dominant in the country.

South Africa received its first 1 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine last week and was expected to begin giving jabs to health care workers in mid-February. The disappointing early results indicate that an inoculation drive using the AstraZeneca vaccine may not be useful.

Preliminary data from a small study suggested that the AstraZeneca vaccine offers only "minimal protection against mild-moderate disease" caused by the variant in South Africa. The variant appears more infectious and is driving a deadly resurgence of the disease in the country, currently accounting for more than 90% of the COVID-19 cases, health minister Zweli Mkhize said Sunday night.

"The AstraZeneca vaccine appeared effective against the original strain, but not against the variant," Mkhize said. "We have decided to put a temporary hold on the rollout of the vaccine ... more work needs to be done."

The study, which hasn't yet been peer-reviewed, involved 2,000 people, most of whom were young and healthy. The volunteers' average age was 31.

"Protection against moderate-severe disease, hospitalization or death could not be assessed in this study as the target population were at such low risk," said a statement issued by Oxford University and the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Scientists will be studying whether or not the AstraZeneca vaccine is effective in preventing severe disease and death against the variant, Mkhize said.

Other vaccines have shown reduced efficacy against the variant, but have provided good protection from serious disease and death.

Public health officials are concerned about the South Africa variant because it contains a mutation of the virus' characteristic spike protein, which is targeted by existing vaccines. South African officials say the variant is more contagious and evidence is emerging that it may be more virulent.

South Africa will urgently roll out other vaccines to inoculate as many as possible in the coming months, Mkhize said. Other South African scientists on Sunday said the clinical trials for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine show good results against the variant.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW: Moving day in the worry-free Toyota RAV4 Hybrid

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

The Toyota RAV4 has taken over sister Prius' spot as the best-selling hybrid in the brand's lineup. But not because it's greener than the iconic sedan: it's more practical.

On a weekend in which I helped move my son into his Seattle townhouse, green was the least of our priorities.

Happily, my RAV4 tester was everything it needed to be. In so doing it gave insight into the limitations of all-electric vehicles and America's craving for SUVs. The RAV4's forefather was the iconic Prius, which put hybrids on the map. It also sold like hot cakes in California because it qualified for $4,000 in state and federal tax breaks—plus free passage to Cal's coveted high-occupancy vehicle commuter lanes.

The 2021 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid delivers utility, 40 mpg, and no range anxiety common to electric SUVs.

Those benefits are long gone—and Prius must sell as a sedan in an SUV market. Good luck. It's not hard to see why utes are hot. They are versatile tools in a demanding world like, say, Seattle where, on any given day, consumers need a commuter car, a weekend getaway vehicle or a moving van.

On this weekend we needed the latter with hatchback, cargo bay and roomy rear seats. And no range anxiety.

A wave of all-electric SUVs is coming to challenge the RAV4, including the VW ID.4 and Ford Mustang Mach E. But they are priced significantly higher and they demand plugs to charge their 200- to 300-mile range. My son's townhouse does not have a fast charger. Oh.

Hybrids are looked down on by greens today because they use gas. But RAV4's hybrid promised 450 miles range, easy access to gasoline stations if we ran low on fuel, and no range anxiety. At $41,100, we could make back its $1,500 premium over the standard, 27 mpg RAV4 in just three years at 41 mpg. It's a bargain.

If you can put up with its annoying electric whrrrrr, that is. It's required at low speeds by the feds (to alert pedestrians of electrified vehicles' presence under 18.6 mph). It drove my son bonkers. Whrrrrrrrr.

Speaking of annoying, it was nice not to add EV range questions to a moving schedule that included repairman times, plumbing issues and cable TV hookup: Would we lose range in 30-degree winter weather? Would Seattle's steep hills suck electrons? Would we be able to find open charger bays?

The big-ticket items were first on our shopping list: big-screen TV, table and chairs, work desk.

The RAV4's cargo hold swallowed them all easily—though the OLED screen required an extra trip to Costco since we didn't want anything else in back that might harm it. The Costco parking lot was jammed on a Saturday—cash-rich Seattle denizens (their stock portfolios runneth over) are apparently upgrading their domiciles now that COVID-19 has forced them to work at home.

RAV4's were everywhere in the parking lot (it is America's best-selling vehicle, after all), and it's not a bad thing to look at. For the current generation Toyota designers took inspiration from the Tacoma pickup, and the RAV4 has a rugged, off-roady appearance that helps it stand out in the boxy SUV crowd.

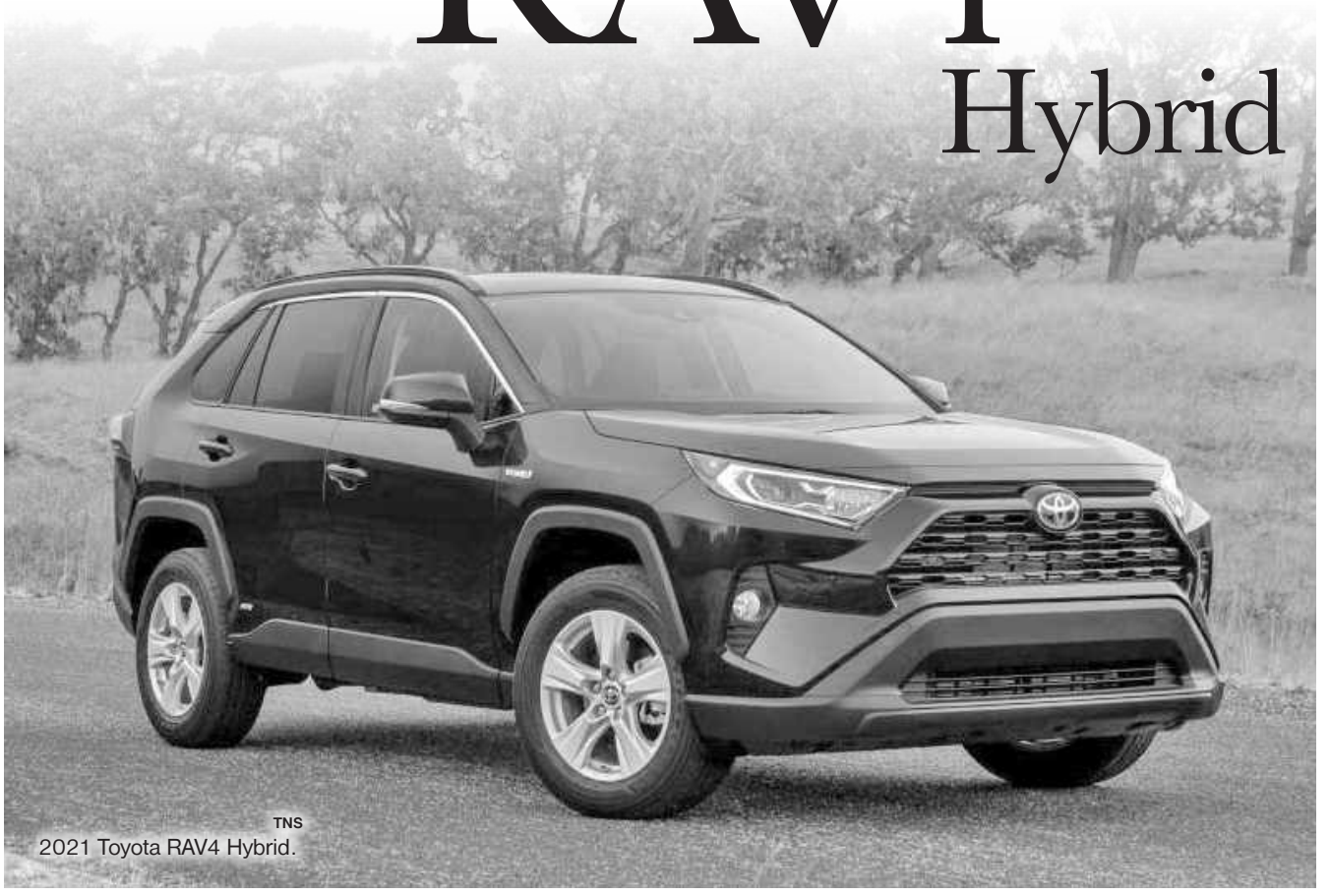
Mrs. Payne could care less about styling—her focus was on the center console as she hooked up to Apple CarPlay to navigate us around watery Seattle's tangle of roads. Knob and button touchscreen controls were easy to use (are you listening Lexus?), and the navigation system never let us down as we hopscotched from one retail superstore to the next.

By day we loaded and unloaded boxes, furniture and groceries. The RAV4 has a clever cubby in the cargo hold that helps with fragile items like bananas or eggs. By night we picked up my son's gal pal and explored Seattle's culinary scene. In striking contrast to the Prius, RAV4 has lots of rear leg room (38.7 inches compared to 33.4), so even your 6'5" giraffe reviewer could easily take a back seat.

RAV4's biggest drawback is that we had to shoe-horn it in to my son's garage. It's a reminder how much vehicles have grown over the years. Fit America's best-selling F-150 pickup into his garage? Fugeddaboutit.

My son is also in the market for a car. Scratch a compact ute off his list. But the shopping experience convinced him that he needs a hatchback as well as all-wheel drive for when snow hits Seattle's vertical streets.

And like his father, he has the need for speed. So he's looking at a hot hatch Mazda3 or VW Golf R that fits his garage. RAV4 may be versatile, but nimble handling is not one of its attributes.



TNS
2021 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid.

NUTS & BOLTS

2021 TOYOTA RAV4 HYBRID

- Vehicle type: Front-wheel-drive, four-door, five-passenger hatchback
- Price: $29,675, including $1,175 destination charge ($41,100 as tested)
- Powerplant: 2.5-liter 4-cylinder engine with lithium-ion battery and AC motor assist
- Power: 219 horsepower combined
- Transmission: Continuously variable transmission
- Performance: 0-60 mph, 7.8 seconds (Motor1.com); towing, 1,750 pounds
- Weight: 3,780 pounds
- Fuel economy: EPA 41 mpg city/38 highway/40 combined

Report card

- Highs: Rugged looks; no range anxiety hybrid driving
- Lows: Numb handling; argh, that low-speed electric sound!

Overall: 3 stars

Motormouth: What is vehicle descent assist?

By BOB WEBER
Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. *Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.*

Q: I have a 2020 Subaru Forester and it has something called a "vehicle descent assist" feature, which I'd love to use, but, according to the manual, it is designed to turn off when the vehicle reaches 25 mph, which it does! This makes no sense to me. Any thoughts or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

—M.F., Bristol, Conn.

A: Hill decent control is helpful if you are driving off-road and going down a steep slope. It is not of much good for everyday driving. But if you want to get out and get dirty, you will like it.

Q: I was recently having my car serviced. The dealer did the tire rotation and reported that one of my aluminum wheels was very slightly out of round, a pothole for sure. It was subtle but visible. He asked if I had any issues with driving it. I said no. He suggested replacing the wheel and that would cost almost $900 for one wheel. He commented that there are aftermarket services that will repair the damage. He also said, that if it's not so bad that you don't notice it, it's probably not that big of a deal. I'm inclined to live with it and evaluate its impact on tire wear.

—T.J., Lake Zurich, Ill.

A: It may simply be cosmetic damage. I would live with it, but I would also keep an eye open for the low tire pressure warning light on the dash. Wheel repair is certainly a money saving option and there are several companies in your area. Some large wheel repair shops may have your wheels in stock and able to ship right away, repair yours and put it in their stock.

Q: As a follow up to the letter from PT Cruiser owner G.H. in Iowa, I would disagree to your response, but only slightly. We have had three – count 'em, three – PT Cruisers over the years and one thing is for sure: It's not if a part like the camshaft position sensor quits, but when. I would respectfully suggest that if he/she has the replacement part in hand, do the repair. It's a five-minute job. Those crazy Cruisers, you either hate them or slightly dislike them.

—N.J., Cudahy, Wis.

A: You sound like either an expert, or a glutton for punishment.

Q: Where are the sensors located for blind-spot alert lights, and how do they work? I have a 2018 Chevy Equinox, and I've had a few blind-spot sensor anomalies recently. I cleared snow off the windows and mirrors of my car but drove with light snow on the body of the car, and the driver's side blind-spot alert was on, despite not driving near any other cars. Later, with no snow on my car, and while crossing a long bridge alone late at night, my driver's side light was illuminated. Luckily, I learned how to drive in the early 2000s in cars built in the 1990s, so I don't really rely on blind-spot alert lights. Just curious about this tech in my newer car.

—A.K., Aurora, Ill.

A: The sensors are located at the rear of the vehicle. Most use radar but some use the ultrasonic parking sensors. I am not sure which system your vehicle uses. When something is detected, a signal is sent to a computer module, which in turn sends a signal to the door mirrors to switch on the light.

Life & Style

Sistine Chapel key-keeper opens up after lockdown

VATICAN CITY (AP)—The Sistine Chapel reopened to public view last week for the first time since its November coronavirus closure, but for Gianni Crea, the doors to Michelangelo's magnificent frescoes were never really closed.

Crea is the "clavigero" of the Vatican Museums, the chief key-keeper whose job begins each morning at 5 a.m., opening the doors and turning on the lights through 7 kilometers (4 1/2 miles) of one of the world's greatest collections of art and antiquities.

The Associated Press followed Crea on his rounds the first day the museum reopened to the public, joining him before dawn in the downstairs "bunker" where the 2,797 keys to the Vatican treasures are kept in wall safes overnight. As the keys dangled and jangled from giant keyrings he wears around his wrist, Crea wound his way through the Gallery of Maps, past the famed marble "Laocoön and His Sons" statue and finally to the Sistine Chapel.

There, at a tiny wooden doorway, Crea drew out a white envelope from his suit pocket, ripped it open and pulled out a small silvery-brass key.

Using a small flashlight to guide his way, he slipped the key into the keyhole, turned it gently and creaked open the door to reveal the still-darkened chapel where popes are made during the secret ceremonies that draw their very name—"conclave"—from the crucial role that keys play in them. Cardinals are essentially locked away "with a key" in the Sistine Chapel and the nearby Vatican hotel for the duration of the solemn vote to elect a new pope.

AP

Gianni Crea, the Vatican Museums chief "Clavigero" key-keeper, walks through the Sistine Chapel as he opens the museum, at the Vatican, Monday, Feb. 1, 2021.

As a result, the Sistine Chapel key is of particular importance and is handled with its own protocol: After the room is shuttered for the day when the last visitor leaves, the key is put back in a new white envelope, sealed, stamped and replaced in the bunker wall safe, with its comings and goings duly noted in a thick registry book.

Crea recalls fondly the day that, three years into his now-23 years of service, he was finally allowed to open the door to the Sistine Chapel alone. The privilege in the two decades since has given him a chance to visit Michelangelo's "Last Temptation" and scenes of the New Testament and Old all alone, in the empty quiet of dawn.

"All the statues, all the rooms have a unique history, but naturally the Sistine Chapel always gives you a particularly emotion," Crea said.

Amanda Gorman, in a first, brings poetry to Super Bowl

NEW YORK (AP)—Amanda Gorman, the 22-year-old poet who stirred America at the inauguration of President Joe Biden last month, again commanded the spotlight on one of the country's biggest stages, the Super Bowl.

Gorman read an original poem Sunday during the pregame festivities in Tampa, Florida. The poem, titled "Chorus of the Captains," was a tribute to three people for their contributions during the pandemic: educator Trimaine Davis, nurse manager Suzie Dorner and Marine veteran James Martin.

Gorman didn't perform on the field but appeared in a taped video message that combined Gorman's reading with images of Davis, Dorner and Martin. Recited Gorman:

"Let us walk with these warriors,
Charge on with these champions,
And carry forth the call of our captains.
We celebrate them by acting,
With courage and compassion,
By doing what is right and just.
For while we honor them today,
It is they who every day honor us."

That Gorman brought poetry to the Super Bowl was an almost unthinkable collision of grace and glitz. But if the Super Bowl, an annual rite of excess, was an unlikely platform for a poet, it showed just how much Gorman has seized the nation's spotlight since the inauguration.

Review: Yawn, is it Monday yet? The Weeknd bores at halftime

NEW YORK (AP)—His name is The Weeknd but his Super Bowl performance felt like a dreary Monday morning.

The pop star headlined the Super Bowl halftime show, running through his many hits like an Olympic relay track team aiming for the gold. But he wasn't victorious Sunday night—no silver or bronze medals will be handed out here.

The Weeknd kicked off his 14-minute set in his signature red blazer and sunglasses, directing his robotic ensemble and singing "Call Out My Name." His nasally, semi-Michael Jackson-esque vocals shined—especially during "The Hills" and "Earned It"—but the performance felt like it was designed for a typical awards show in the vein of the Billboard Awards or MTV VMAs—not the Super Bowl stage.

Maybe he had restrictions—either creatively, or COVID-ly? Who knows, but overall his performance felt limited and inadequate. Special guests should have been a non-negotiable.

The Weeknd finally came to life—10 minutes to the performance—when he and dozens of his dancers hit the field to perform the explosive hit "Blinding Lights," giving off flash mob vibes.

He was finally center stage, where he needed to be all night. But it was too late to save the show —most of the singing was done on the sidelines, as if it was an afterthought. Maybe because it was.

Stephen King helps kids publish pandemic-inspired book

LEWISTON, Maine (AP) — A group of budding young writers is about to publish a book with some help from Maine's most famous writer.

Stephen King's foundation covered the $6,500 cost of publishing a 290-page manuscript by students participating in Farwell Elementary School's Author Studies Program.

The students started with "Fletcher McKenzie and the Passage to Whole," a story about a Maine boy by Gary Savage, and then reworked it to reflect their experiences during the pandemic.

Farwell Principal Amanda Winslow said she is proud of the students for their accomplishment and thankful for the dedication of Savage, who advised the students, and librarian Kathy Martin.

A number of local groups also sent donations that will be used for the Author Studies program.

Jailed rapper Casanova disciplined for video dance challenge

VALHALLA, N.Y. (AP)—Rapper Casanova, who is jailed in New York in a gang-related federal racketeering case, is facing disciplinary charges over a dance challenge video posted on social media.

The 34-year-old rapper, whose legal name is Caswell Senior, will be disciplined by officials at the Westchester County Jail after a woman recorded him accepting the so-called Junebug challenge during a video visit, the Journal News reported.

The challenge asks TikTok users to perform a set of moves in the strangest location they can think of. The woman recorded Casanova dancing in jail and posted it on Instagram, the newspaper reported.

Privacy becomes an issue after woman discovers affair

DEAR ABBY: Because my fiance and I had bad experiences in the past, we settled on just living together for the last 17 years. He has been like a husband to me and faithful all these years. Recently, however, I caught him in an online affair.

I checked his phone one day out of the blue—something I have never done before because we respect each other's privacy. The emails were daily, back and forth, with only one mentioning a sexual encounter at the beginning.

He confessed that he had made a big mistake once and refused to see her again in person but had kept up the correspondence. He begged me to forgive him and I agreed, since we were together for so long.

The problem is, now we argue about his phone. He still expects the same privacy with it. I don't feel comfortable with that now. Does he still deserve the same privacy?

HUNG UP IN OHIO

DEAR HUNG UP: No, he does not. What he deserves is the chance to rebuild your trust, and that involves accountability on his part, which includes allowing you access to his phone if you feel insecure.

After 17 years together, both of you have a large emotional investment in this relationship. Because of that, it might be beneficial to schedule some sessions with a licensed relationship counselor to figure out where it went off the rails.

DEAR ABBY: I read your column every day. I know sometimes you suggest people see a doctor, either medical or psychological. What do you do if you are terrified of doctors?

I have asthma and consult my doctor via a computer, but some doctors (like dentists) can't do that. I have horrible panic attacks and anxiety. Then my asthma kicks in, I can't breathe, and I cry uncontrollably. I don't want to take medications because they make me sleepy.

Because I'm so doped up, someone has to come with me to the doctor to drive me home and watch me be an uncontrollable mess. Also, missing a whole day of work for a one-hour doctor appointment is, in my opinion, ridiculous. I think I'd rather be sick than go to the doctor.

My family insists it's all in my head and I should just get over it, but because of many horrible experiences at doctors' offices, which I believe caused my fear, I just can't. The current situation with the worldwide COVID epidemic has made my anxiety worse. Your thoughts?

TERRIFIED TO GO THERE

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

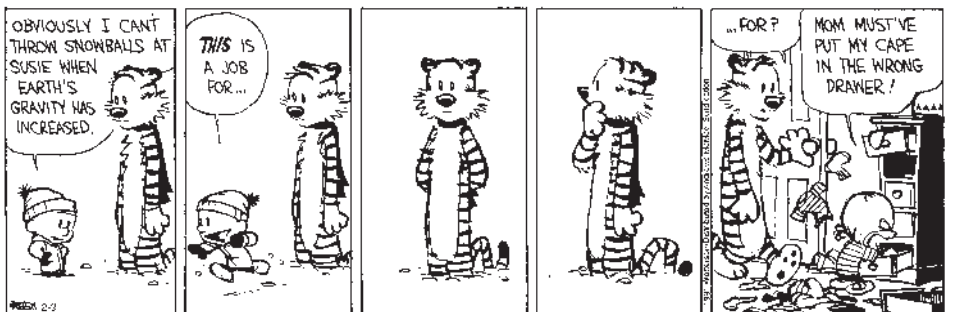
DEAR TERRIFIED: My thought is that you need to ask your doctor or your insurance company for a referral to a licensed psychologist who specializes in phobias and panic attacks. Many of them consult with their patients online these days. Once you finally get a handle on that problem, the rest will be easier. While few people relish the idea of going to the doctor or dentist, NOT doing what is necessary to protect your health can be dangerous.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

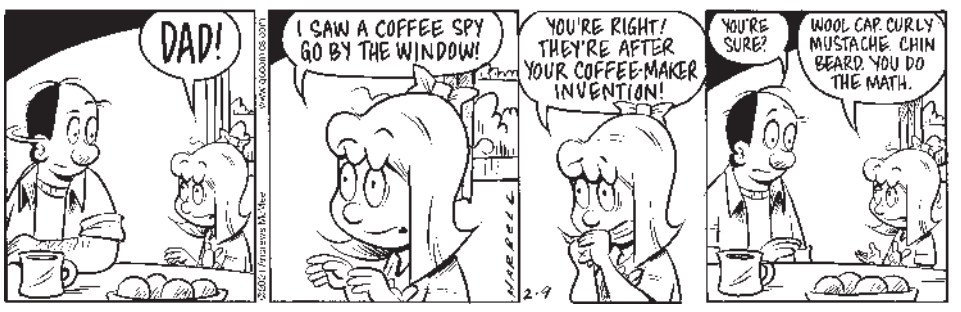

OBVIOUSLY I CAN'T THROW SNOWBALLS AT SUSIE WHEN EARTH'S GRAVITY WAS INCREASED.
THIS IS A JOB FOR...
...FOR?
MOM MUST'VE PUT MY CAPE IN THE WRONG DRAWER!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

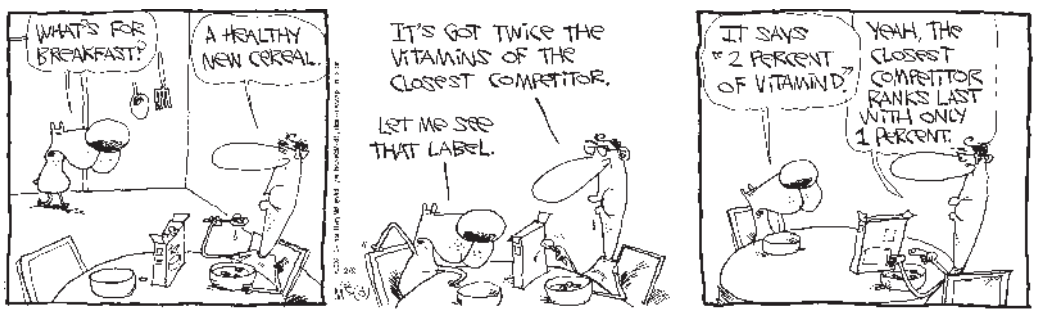
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD!
I SAW A COFFEE SPY GO BY THE WINDOW!
YOU'RE RIGHT! THEY'RE AFTER YOUR COFFEE-MAKER INVENTION!
YOU'RE SURE?
WOOL CAP. CURLY MUSTACHE. CHIN BEARD. YOU DO THE MATH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST?
A HEALTHY NEW CEREAL.
IT'S GOT TWICE THE VITAMINS OF THE CLOSEST COMPETITOR.
LET ME SEE THAT LABEL.
IT SAYS "2 PERCENT OF VITAMIN D."
YEAH, THE CLOSEST COMPETITOR RANKS LAST WITH ONLY 1 PERCENT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Greek cheese
5 Earth Day mo.
8 New Age pianist John
12 Algerian port
13 Spy org.
14 Outside (Pref.)
15 Conical topper
17 Hosp. scans
18 Metal source
19 Tainted
21 Lake flock
24 Heavy reading?
25 Not even one
26 Substitute (for)
30 Oft-torn knee part, for short
31 Peony part
32 Botanist Gray
33 "The Color of Money" setting
35 Predicament
36 Valentine border
37 Blood line?
38 "Broadway Joe"
41 Equi-
42 Utah city
43 Carry a gun
48 Butte's kin
49 "As I see it," in a text
50 Sty cry
51 Get lippy
52 Ages and ages
53 Aware of

DOWN
1 Dandy guy
2 Notable time
3 Sailor
4 "— and Cleopatra"
5 Massage target
6 Entertainer Zadora
7 Sensible
8 Plant-based protein
9 Beige
10 Swizzle
11 Firetruck necessity
16 Decade parts (Abbr.)
20 2150, to Brutus
21 Ginger cookie
22 Texas city
23 Woody Guthrie's son
24 Boxer's dream
26 Fruit-filled dessert
27 Tresses
28 "— It Romantic?"
29 "I did it!"
31 Excellent, in slang
34 Andean beasts
35 Sobbing sound
37 Request
38 Aliases
39 Bailiwick
40 Disorder
41 PC picture
44 "I love," to Livy
45 Aachen article
46 Picnic crasher
47 Ring decision

Solution time: 22 mins.

G	U	M		T	E	N	S	E		W	O	W
A	R	A		I	L		A	D		I	R	E
B	I	R	D	C	A	L	L	S		N	E	A
			C	T	S		V	C	N	O	O	P
R	E	H	E	A	T		O	L	A	F		
A	M			G	I	A		S	T	A	T	S
G	I	G	S		C	A	P		C	L	A	L
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L	I	L		M	E	S	S	H	A	L	L	S
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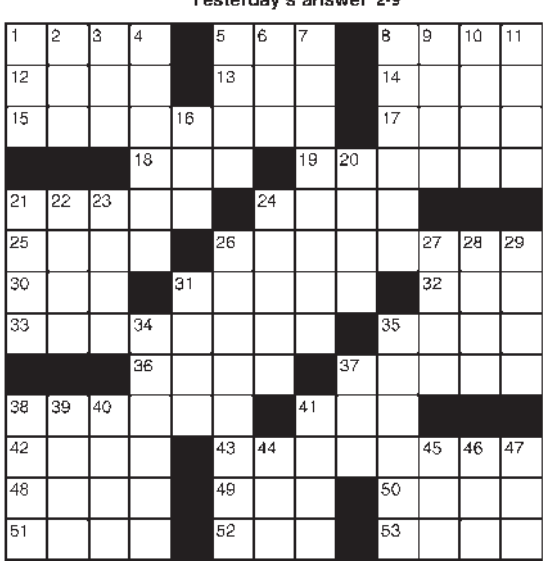
P	T	S		A	T	A	L	E		T	O	Y

Yesterday's answer 2-9



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tyson Houseman, 31; Michael B. Jordan, 34; Mia Farrow, 76; Joe Pesci, 78.

Happy Birthday: Look for the positive in every situation this year, and you will find it easier to make headway. How you approach people and situations will determine how much help and support you receive. Personal growth and a plan will help you achieve the success you desire. Refuse to let outside influences slow you down. Strive for perfection and stability. Your numbers are 6, 9, 17, 22, 27, 32, 36.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Keep things moving forward. A positive attitude will help ward off emotional interference. Stay focused on what you are trying to achieve, and the difference you make will encourage others to follow suit. Choose to proceed with kindness. Romance is favored. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Put your differences aside; focus your energy on getting things done. A push to bring about personal change that promotes a relaxing atmosphere will ease stress. It's up to you to make decisions that support your happiness. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Take on something that interests you. A new position or project will challenge you intellectually and push you to learn more and take better care of yourself and financial future. Romance is featured, and personal gain looks promising. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Offer suggestions, do your part and put unfinished business to rest. Handle money matters, contracts or joint endeavors with enthusiasm, and you will make a difference to the recipients of your hard work and dedication. Your efforts will result in rewards. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let what others do upset you. Take the initiative, look out for your interests and get things done on time. Opportunity is apparent, but it's up to you to take advantage of whatever situation you face. Leadership is a necessity. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Live and learn. Take your time, listen carefully and make changes that improve your social standing, attitude and relationships with others. Don't take a risk with your health or jeopardize your position because of someone's indiscretion. Do what's best for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Control your emotions, and concentrate on your responsibilities. How you conduct business, handle investments and deal with health issues will make differences to the way you live. Personal changes may be beneficial for you, but they'll likely make someone close to you rebel. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Proceed with caution. A problem with a partner, friend or relative will surface if you are outspoken or indulgent. Relax, be introspective and let situations unfold naturally. Now is not the time to start a war with someone you love. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take hold of whatever situation you face. Be positive, offer insight and come to conclusions based on facts, not hearsay. The way you present your ideas will determine the rewards you reap. Proceed with patience, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Formulate your plan, then put it in motion. Don't let what others do or say deter you from reaching your destination. A unique approach will lead to an exciting offer. Put your effort into pursuing something that makes you happy. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Someone will outsmart you if you don't prepare appropriately. Leave nothing to chance, and you will outmaneuver anyone who tries to upstage you. Confidence, dedication and discipline will be your tickets to success. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Look for an opportunity, and don't hesitate to take advantage of an offer. How you conduct yourself will make an impression on someone who can help you advance. Make suggestions and offer solutions, but don't share personal information. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are restless, ambitious and confident. You are perceptive and imaginative.

1 star: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. 2 stars: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. 3 stars: Focus and you'll reach your goals. 4 stars: Aim high; start new projects. 5 stars: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5					6		1
7			8	3			5	
		3			1			8
	1					3		
	2						4	
		6					1	
4			6			1		
	7			5	9			6
2		9					7	

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	6	5	8	9	2	7	1	3
9	8	1	3	5	7	4	6	2
2	7	3	1	4	6	9	5	8
8	4	9	2	1	3	6	7	5
3	5	7	4	6	9	8	2	1
6	1	2	7	8	5	3	9	4
1	9	8	5	7	4	2	3	6
7	3	4	6	2	1	5	8	9
5	2	6	9	3	8	1	4	7

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GOOD HABITS TO HAVE — Solution: 5 letters

R	E	L	A	X	L	A	N	R	U	O	J	E	F	P
E	R	O	L	P	X	E	A	R	L	Y	S	A	R	U
L	I	F	E	S	T	Y	L	E	D	I	M	A	I	N
A	X	O	T	E	D	O	P	C	C	I	Y	S	E	C
T	L	R	M	U	V	O	E	R	L	I	E	S	N	T
I	I	E	T	E	R	E	E	Y	N	E	K	T	D	U
O	S	S	G	T	R	X	L	G	R	I	A	H	S	A
N	T	T	I	U	E	I	S	H	N	Ⓕ	Ⓤ	Ⓝ	L	L
S	E	O	T	G	H	O	B	B	Y	C	O	E	S	Y
H	N	S	O	E	D	E	R	E	A	D	V	O	R	E
I	O	A	A	N	S	D	L	R	D	A	R	A	D	W
P	L	L	E	A	R	N	E	P	R	R	I	A	L	A
S	T	F	E	A	E	T	A	T	I	D	E	M	T	T
H	E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	N	S	A	V	E
D	I	G	E	D	U	T	I	T	A	R	G	E	M	R

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Care, Cleanse, Defend, Detox, Diary, Diet, Dream, Early, Education, Exercise, Explore, Family, Food, Friends, Fun, Goals, Gratitude, Guard, Hair, Health, Helping, Hobby, Hug, Hydrate, Ideas, Journal, Learn, Lifestyle, Listen, Love, Meditate, Portion, Posture, Praying, Punctual, Read, Relationships, Relax, Rest, Save, Skin, Sleep, Study, Travel, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Red Rabbit

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 47 through 61 order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Mitchell, Jazz win for 15th time in 16 games

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Minus star point guard Mike Conley, the Utah Jazz got to see Donovan Mitchell do a bit of everything.

Mitchell came within one rebound of a triple-double with 27 points, 11 assists, and nine boards as the Jazz won for the 15th time in 16 games, beating the Indiana Pacers 103-95 Sunday.

The Jazz improved their NBA-best record to 19-5 despite missing Mike Conley, who was scratched with a hamstring injury. Mitchell ensured a fast start with 11 first-quarter points.

"From the beginning, I just wanted to establish the mentality that we were going to push through," Mitchell said. "There were times we were tired, but we had to do it collectively."

When he wasn't driving past defenders, he was pulling up for uncontested jumpers. When covered, he didn't hesitate to distribute the ball to teammates.

"Those shots are more open when you attack the rim," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said

Former Pacer Bojan Bogdanovic was rewarded for driving to the rim as he broke an 83-all tie with a three-point play midway through the fourth quarter. On subsequent possessions, Mitchell fed Bogdanovic and Joe Ingles for 3-pointers.

The Jazz made up for misses by hitting the boards with a 69-54 advantage that included 17 offensive rebounds.

In the final two minutes, Mitchell banked home a runner and sank a pair of foul shots for a 100-91 lead. During a late timeout, teammates advised him he needed one rebound for a triple-double.

"I'm not the type of person to go and chase it," Mitchell said. "I'm just trying to find ways to impact the game."

Kings 113, Clippers 110

In Los Angeles, De'Aaron Fox scored 36 points, Buddy Hield added 22 and the Sacramento Kings beat the Clippers for their fourth straight victory.

The Kings are 7-1 since suffering a 19-point drubbing by the Clippers on Jan. 20.

"It was a real scrappy win on this back-to-back with an early start," Kings coach Luke Walton said.

Sacramento has won seven of eight for the first time since 2006, the last time the team made the playoffs.

"We're playing defense. That's the biggest thing about what we're doing right now. We knew we're able to score with anybody. When we've needed stops we've been able to get them," Fox said. "If we can stay locked in defensively and we can keep our turnovers down, we can give ourselves a chance to win."

Lou Williams scored 23 points off the bench for the Clippers, who dropped two in a row for the first time this season. Kawhi Leonard had 20 points and 10 rebounds as they played without injured Paul George.

Suns 100, Celtics 91

In Phoenix, Mikal Bridges scored 19 points, Devin Booker had 18 points and 11 assists and the Suns held on to beat Boston.

Phoenix improved to 13-9 and has won five of six. Cam Johnson added 17 points off the bench while Deandre Ayton had 16 points and 11 rebounds.

Jayson Tatum led Boston with 23 points and seven assists. Walker added 14 for the Celtics, who stayed fairly close for most of the game despite a rough shooting performance.

AP

Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell, top, shoots over Indiana Pacers guard Justin Holiday (8) during the first half of an NBA game in Indianapolis, Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021.

Heat 109, Knicks 103

In New York, Bam Adebayo had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Jimmy Butler had a big second half and just missed a triple-double and Miami beat the Knicks in the opener of a home-and-home series.

Butler finished with 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists. He shot just 3 for 11 from the field but scored 12 points after halftime.

Kendrick Nunn and Tyler Herro each added 16 points for the Heat, who won their second straight after dropping seven of eight.

Julius Randle had 26 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists, but the Knicks had their two-game win streak snapped. Reggie Bullock made seven 3-pointers and scored 21 points.

Hornets 119, Wizards 97

In Charlotte, Terry Rozier had 26 points with five 3-pointers, Gordon Hayward added 25 points and the Hornets beat Washington.

LaMelo Ball followed up a career-best 34-point effort against the Utah Jazz with another strong game, finishing with 19 points, seven rebounds and five assists as the Hornets handed the Wizards their seventh loss in nine games.

Bradley Beal, the NBA's leading scorer coming in at 33.3 points per game, led Washington with 31 points on 11-for-22 shooting. Russell Westbrook had 12 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists, falling short of his sixth triple-double of the season.

Bauer joining World Series champions Dodgers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Trevor Bauer is coming home to pitch for the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers.

The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner announced his decision on Friday in a two-minute video posted to his Twitter account. Bauer narrated the piece, which ended with him saying, "This season is about making sure history remembers us as we wish to be remembered. This season is about adding to our legacy. And I can't wait, Dodger fans."

The Dodgers made it worth his while: His contract is for $102 million over three years, according to multiple media reports.

The video was titled "MY NEW HOME!!!" and the credits said it was written by Bauer, who wore a Dodgers jersey and cap. He tossed a baseball from one hand to the other.

Bauer, who turned 30 last month, was born in North Hollywood, went to high school in Santa Clarita and played baseball at UCLA.

The right-handed free agent also was negotiating with the New York Mets. Bauer's agent, Rachel Luba, tweeted, "So excited for your next chapter with the @Dodgers, Trevor Bauer."

For the second straight year, the Dodgers had a mostly quiet offseason before making a blockbuster deal in February. In 2020, they traded for outfielder Mookie Betts and pitcher David Price, who opted out last season because of the pandemic. Price is expected back this year.

Price tweeted his reaction: three flushed face emojis and "WOW!!"

Bauer joins a Dodgers rotation that had a major league-best 3.02 ERA during the abbreviated 60-game season last year, when the franchise won its first championship since 1988.

He gives the club a third Cy Young winner, joining three-time winner Clayton Kershaw and 2012 winner Price. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the Dodgers are the first team to have three former Cy Young winners in their rotation since the Detroit Tigers in 2014 had Justin Verlander, Max Scherzer and Price.

With the upcoming season expanding from 60 games to a full 162-game schedule, the Dodgers can go seven-deep in their rotation, which includes Julio Urias, Dustin May and Tony Gonsolin.

Bauer is 75-64 with a 3.90 ERA in nine major league seasons that included a career-best 17-9 with a 4.19 ERA for Cleveland in 2017. He was an All-Star the following year, going 12-6 with a 2.21 ERA.

Bauer was 5-4 in his second season with Cincinnati and his 1.73 ERA was second in the major leagues among qualified pitchers behind only Cleveland's Shane Bieber at 1.63. Bauer earned $6,481,481 in prorated pay from a $17.5 million salary.

Arizona drafted Bauer with the third overall pick in the 2011 amateur draft. He made his big league debut with the Diamondbacks the following year and went 1-2 in four starts, then was traded to Cleveland in December 2012 with pitchers Matt Albers and Bryan Shaw as part of a three-team trade that brought shortstop Didi Gregorius and pitcher Tony Sipp to Arizona, outfielder Drew Stubbs to Cleveland and outfielder Shin-Soo Choo to Cincinnati.

He was traded to Cincinnati in July 2019 in another three-team deal, one with Cleveland and San Diego that sent pitcher Logan Allen and outfielders Franmil Reyes and Yasiel Puig to the Indians.

Bauer has caused controversy on social media. A female college student claimed to USA Today in 2019 that Bauer harassed her on Twitter, accusing him of retweeting an old tweet of her referring to drinking alcohol before her 21st birthday. USA Today said there were 80 tweets of Bauer that mentioned her and 20 of her that mentioned the pitcher. Bauer tweeted the woman "was obsessed with me."

He took after baseball owners for the sport's economics last May during bargaining to start the pandemic-delayed season.

Meanwhile, Marcell Ozuna is returning to Atlanta, with or without the designated hitter.

The Braves reclaimed Ozuna's power bat for the middle of their lineup on Friday night by signing the slugger to a $65 million, four-year contract.

The Braves announced the deal for the 2020 National League home run and RBI leader less than two weeks before pitchers and catchers are set to report for spring training. The deal includes a fifth-year club option for $16 million with a $1 million buyout.

The Braves made the major commitment to Ozuna despite having no assurance there will be a DH in the NL in 2021. The Braves lost to the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 7 of the NL Championship Series after leading the series 3-1.

Serena, Osaka cruise into second round

MELBOURNE— Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka made flying starts to their Australian Open campaigns.

The city's mixed feelings about the tournament were evident in sparse crowds at Melbourne Park but that did not bother seven-time champion Williams or title favourite Osaka.

Wearing a striking one-legged catsuit that she later revealed was inspired by 1980s athletics star Florence Griffith Joyner, Williams brushed aside Germany's Laura Siegemund, 6-1 6-1, in just 56 minutes.

The 39-year-old made a nervous start to her 100th match at the tournament, dropping serve in the opening game, but won the next 10 to ease through to a second-round clash with Nina Stojanovic.

Williams had pulled out of last week's warm-up event with a shoulder problem, and said: "I was happy just to get through it. I wasn't sure how my serve would be after a little bit of that shoulder, but it's feeling good, I'm feeling good."

"I just was watching as much as I could to see," she said. "My only word is it's unbelievable. I kept saying, 'This is unbelievable, this is unreal'."

It was a successful day for the Williams family, with Venus claiming her first victory at a grand slam since 2019.

Like Williams, Osaka withdrew from last week's warm-up event with a shoulder problem but she made it clear it was precautionary and was in fine fettle in a 6-1 6-2 victory over Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

Pavlyuchenkova had reached the quarter-finals in three of the past four years but Osaka was simply far too sharp, winning the opening four games and barely putting a foot wrong.

On what appeared to be a tough draw, Osaka said: "It's always really hard to play someone that good in the first round. I feel like it might have also helped in a way because I calmed my nerves because I felt like I couldn't afford to be that nervous."

The victory extended Osaka's winning run, stretching back a year, to 15 matches, and she cited last year's defeat by Coco Gauff in Melbourne as a turning point in her mental approach.

The third seed, who won her third slam title at the US Open last summer, said: "I think just after losing here to Coco, because she is sort of the person that I never wanted to lose to in this situation, just being the defending champion, losing to her in such a high-profile match, I think it really shocked me.

"I actually played a match in Fed Cup in Spain that I don't know if a lot of people knew about (losing 6-0 6-3 to Sara Sorribes Tormo).

"There's just a lot of stuff that happened there, surrounding that time, that it really made me think a lot about my life and what is the reason—am I playing tennis to prove stuff to other people or am I playing to have fun because I enjoy it?"

French Open champion Iga Swiatek has been wrestling with the different pressures of being a grand slam winner but the Pole negotiated her first hurdle successfully, beating

AP

United States' Serena Williams makes a forehand return to Germany's Laura Siegemund during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Feb. 8, 2021.

BRADY

From Page 20

attended, including approximately 7,500 vaccinated health care workers given free tickets by the NFL. About 30,000 cardboard cutouts made the stadium look full.

A streaker wearing a hot-pink onesie eluded security and slid into the end zone with 5:03 left in the game. Kansas City's high-powered offense never got that far against Tampa's fierce defense.

"Obviously I didn't play the way I wanted to play," Mahomes said. "What else can you say? All you can do is leave everything you have on the field. I feel like the guys did that. ... They beat us pretty good, the worst I've been beaten in a long time."

Bruce Arians became the oldest coach at age 68 to win the Super Bowl. His mom, 95-year-old Kay Arians, witnessed it in person. Brady, Gronk and defensive coordinator Todd Bowles helped Arians get that Vince Lombardi Trophy.

"This really belongs to the coaching staff and our players. I didn't do a damn thing," Arians said after he was handed the trophy.

Bowles devised a masterful plan to frustrate Mahomes and shut down the Chiefs, the complete opposite of Kansas City's 27-24 win in Tampa in Week 12, when the Chiefs jumped to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter. Tyreek Hill had 269 yards receiving and three TDs in that one. He was held to 73 yards on seven catches Sunday.

"Coach Bowles is a mastermind," Bucs cornerback Sean Murphy-Bunting said.

After the Chiefs took a 3-0 early lead, it was all Brady and the Bucs.

Brady accomplished a career-first with an 8-yard TD pass to Gronkowski for a 7-3 lead with 37 seconds left in the first quarter. Brady's nine Super Bowl teams in New England produced just three points total in the first quarter. Gronkowski, who came out of retirement to play with his buddy, caught his 13th and 14th postseason TDs from Brady. They had been tied at 12 with Jerry Rice and Joe Montana.

"To come here and be Super Bowl champs, it's surreal, man," said Gronkowski, who came out of retirement to play with Brady. "We have so many superstars on this team but nobody's head was too big. Whoever got the ball got the ball. That's what was so great about being on this team. There was no one who was selfish on this team. No one selfish in the organization. It just happened to be me this time getting the touchdown passes."

Despite playing at home, the Buccaneers weren't allowed to fire the cannons from their famed pirate ship after touchdowns and big plays. They did it soon after the clock expired as red, white and black confetti fell onto the field.

Fans still enjoyed the thud of Gronk's thunderous spike after his first score.

Tampa missed an opportunity to extend the lead when Brady's 2-yard pass to offensive lineman Joe Haeg was knocked out of his hands in the end zone. Ronald Jones was stopped short on consecutive carries as Arians stuck to his "No risk it, no biscuit" philosophy and went on fourth down.

But the Chiefs didn't gain any momentum off the stop. Instead, they made one costly mistake after another.

SUPER

From Page 20

in all our hosted bars and establishments and we're very pleased with the turnout and happy for football fans that their able continue this tradition," said Guy Pudney, resident manager of MARPAC, which sponsored the Super Bowl party at Hyatt and four other bars/restaurants on island.

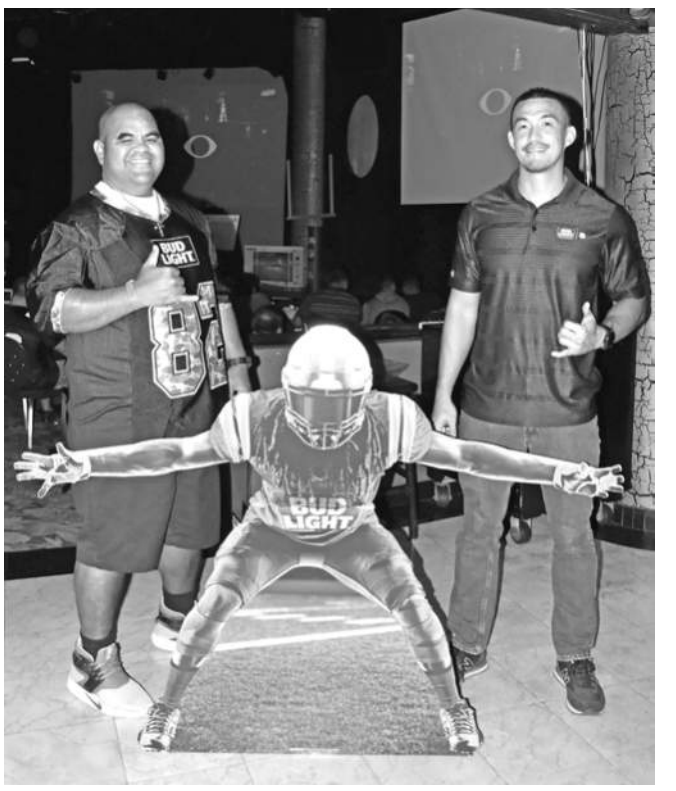
Former CNMI football player and coach John Blanco said the Super Bowl LV party gave him the chance to enjoy watching the sport dear to him with his friends and fellow gridiron fans, again and he thanked the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force for making this opportunity or even "luxury" possible.

"We have the pandemic under control so we are able to hold events like this and we have the task force to thank for and all the people working hard to make sure that we are safe here," Blanco said.

Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez was also among the attendees in the Super Bowl LV party at the Hyatt and commended the community for cooperating with the government's call to practice safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

"We're very fortunate that at this time of the pandemic we're able to have events like this. That's because of our front-liners and government leaders who are working to ensure our safety and of course the entire community for following safety protocols. Please continue to be vigilant and follow the 3 Ws—wash your hands, wear your masks, and watch your distance," Villagomez said.

Villagomez also appealed to the community to participate in the CNMI's COVID-19 vaccination program.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jacob Villagomez, left, poses for a photo with MARPAC's James Lee after winning a raffle prize during the Super Bowl LV party at the Hyatt Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tampa Bay Buccaneers fans celebrate after their team scored a touchdown in the second quarter against the Kansas City Chiefs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Northern Marianas Badminton Association players and officials join Tinian residents for a group photo after conducting Shuttle Time sessions last weekend at the Tinian Youth Center. NMBA and players who represented the CNMI to the 2019 Pacific Games taught Tinian residents drills and basic skills in badminton as part of the group's outreach and development programs.

NMBA brings Shuttle Time to Tinian

SAN JOSE, Tinian—The Northern Marianas Badminton Association provided Tinian the much welcome outdoor activity at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic by holding Shuttle Time over the weekend.

NMBA members and CNMI National Team players Janelle and Jordan Pangilinan, Nicole Malasarte, Daniel and Ezekiel Macario, and Nate Guerrero taught over 30 Tinian residents badminton drills and basic skills last Friday and Saturday at the Tinian Youth Center.

The event is part of NMBA's development and outreach programs and the group utilized Shuttle Time— a Badminton World Federation-led initiative that aims at bringing the sport closer to students by offering schools access to free resources, training, and equipment to support the teaching of enjoyable and safe badminton activities to children.

Tinian Elementary School student Galyo Untalan was among the participants in last weekend's Shuttle Time and was excited to see a group of athletes coming to the island to introduce them to a new sport.

"I love playing soccer and I also know how to play baseball, but I still want to learn other sports, so I am glad that you're able to come here and teach us how to play badminton," Untalan said. "We did not have much to do nowadays because of the pandemic, so I am happy I get to play. "This is fun, especially the part when I get to hit the shuttlecock."

Tinian Junior Senior High School students and Northern Marianas College's Joseph King also joined the two-day clinic.

"I am just home for the weekend and will return to Saipan. I heard about Shuttle Time going to Tinian, so the timing is perfect. I am interested in the sport and will definitely check NMBA out when I return to Saipan," King said.

Tinian students were accompanied by their parents at the clinic and some tried working on the racket and hitting the shuttlecock. NMBA used the equipment for Air-Badminton since it held the clinic outdoor.

"I wish you guys could go here every weekend to hold events like this for the kids. Since we had the pandemic, they've been rarely doing outdoor activities. After online school, they would turn into their gadgets and it's not good to them, physically and mentally," said Venus Manglona, whose daughters and son attended Shuttle Time.

"It's great to see our children having fun and doing physical activities, especially at this time of the pandemic. Us, parents, would also love to try and learn the sport," she added.

Meanwhile, Malasarte had flashbacks when she saw young children at the clinic.

"I see myself in them. I was 7 years old when I started to learn badminton," said Malasarte, who represented the CNMI to the 2019 Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa.

Ezekiel Macario, who also played for the Commonwealth in the Pacific Games, said that they are happy to do Shuttle Time on Tinian to spread the word about badminton, especially now that the CNMI is preparing for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games.

Shuttle Time's stop on Tinian was NMBA's first this year and seventh overall since the group has implemented the program a couple of years ago. The association could have done more sessions last year if not for the pandemic.

NMBA president Merlie Tolentino said they are looking at bringing Shuttle Time to as many schools as possible and to the community, including on Rota.

"The NMBA would like to extend its reach to all three islands and provide opportunities to more residents, especially our youth. The more people we engage in, the better chances we could develop a pool of athletes that we could tap to represent the islands in future competitions," Tolentino said. ***(PR)***

Mitchell, Jazz win for 15th time in 16 games

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NMBA brings Shuttle Time to Tinian

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Brady, Bucs rout Chiefs

AP

Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after their NFL Super Bowl 55 game against the Kansas City Chiefs, Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021, in Tampa, Fla. The Buccaneers defeated the Chiefs, 31-9, to win the Super Bowl.

By ROB MAADDI
AP FOOTBALL WRITER

TAMPA, Fla.—Tom Brady made the Buccaneers, their fans and their city believe from the moment he arrived in Tampa Bay.

With help from old friend Rob Gronkowski and a ferocious defense, Brady and the Buccaneers are Super Bowl champions.

Brady threw two touchdown passes to Gronkowski and one to good pal Antonio Brown, and the Buccaneers routed Patrick Mahomes and Kansas City 31-9 on their home field in Super Bowl 55 on Sunday.

"You get this far and you wanna get the job done and we did it," Brady said. "We just believed. I'm so proud of the guys."

Despite moving south to a new team and conference during a pandemic, Brady didn't slow down at age 43.

The GOAT earned his fifth Super Bowl MVP award and extended his Super Bowl titles' record in his 10th appearance, nine with New England. Brady broke his own mark for oldest player to win a Super Bowl and joined Hall of Famer Peyton Manning as the only quarterbacks to win one with multiple franchises.

"I think they're all special," Brady said. "I'm not making any comparisons. Experiencing it with this group of guys is amazing."

Stunningly, it was easier than any of his previous Super Bowl victories, which came by an average margin of five points. Mahomes lost by double digits for the first time in his four-year career.

The Buccaneers (15-5) took their second NFL title and first in 18 years as the first team to play the big game at home, capping an unusual and challenging season played through the novel coronavirus. They won three road games as a wild card to reach the Super Bowl, and joined the NHL's Lightning as a 2020 season champion. The Rays also went to the World Series but lost to the Dodgers.

Mahomes and the Chiefs (16-3) failed to become the first repeat champions since Brady's Patriots in 2003-04.

"I didn't see it coming at all," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "I thought we were going to come in and play these guys just like we've been playing teams, and it didn't happen that way. I give them credit on that."

The NFL completed its 269-game season on time without any cancellations, a remarkable accomplishment that required nearly 1 million COVID-19 tests for players and team personnel.

Due to the virus, only 25,000 mask-wearing fans

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Super Bowl tradition continues amid pandemic

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jacob Villagomez did not know if establishments on Saipan's will be hosting Super Bowl LV parties.

They did and Villagomez and hundreds of football fans on island who spent their Monday morning watching Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers dethrone the Kansas Chiefs were thankful for the opportunity to continue their annual tradition.

"I've been watching the Super Bowl for nearly two decades and this year I thought we won't able to watch it with my friends. It's only a few days ago that I and my friends found out that there will be Super Bowl shows on island and we're very fortunate to have this opportunity," said Villagomez.

The San Vicente resident watched the Super Bowl LV at the Hyatt Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Saipan where nearly 40 gridiron fans witnessed Brady lead the Bucs to a 31-9 rout of the Chiefs.

"We could have hosted more people if not for the pandemic and the restrictions in place. But, we're sold out

See SUPER on Page 18

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A MARPAC staff in mask talks to one of the spectators at the Super Bowl LV party at the Hyatt Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday morning.